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V. H. Maynes

THE
IDYLLIA
AND
OTHER POEMS THAT ARE EXTANT
OF
BION AND MOSCHUS:

TRANSLATED FROM
THE GREEK INTO ENGLISH VERSE.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED
A FEW OTHER TRANSLATIONS,

WITH
NOTES CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, BROWN AND GREEN,
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PREFACE.

THE following Translations were commenced some years ago, in a colony abroad, and continued at intervals of leisure, more as an object of recreation than of study, and without any intention of their ever being made public. Since the Translator's return, the persuasions of some learned friends have induced him to add what was wanting to complete the series of poems, and to revise the whole, with the advantage of better editions than he could before procure, in the hope of rendering it not unworthy of the public eye. On perusing the versions we already possess of these poems, he found no reason to think that such an undertaking had been rendered unnecessary. Without wishing to depreciate the labours of those who have preceded him in the path which he has chosen, he hopes the ground is not so occupied as to preclude all further competition. The translations of Bion and Moschus by Mr. Fawkes and Mr. Polewhele, whatever may be their general merits, have cer-

tainly not done every thing that could be wished by the admirers of these poets, to give those unacquainted with them in the original a just conception of their beauties. How far this deficiency will be supplied by the one now offered to the public, it would be presumptuous to say. The translator is conscious that he has given but a feeble sketch of the exquisite models lying before him. He hopes, however, that an attempt still further to illustrate these elegant poets, and to present them in a more acceptable shape to the English reader, may, though it should fail of success, be at least entitled to indulgence. To those who have learning and taste to relish them in the original tongue, he can confidently appeal. Such judges, and such only, can duly estimate the difficulty of transfusing the delicacies and graces of such writers into another language.

In their present form, these poets will have one advantage, at least, which they had not in any former translation; that of standing *by themselves*; not huddled in amongst a crowd of *Poetæ minores*, or subjoined as appendages to Theocritus; a fate which has likewise too often attended them in the original tongue. Their junction with the latter in particular has operated against them in more than one respect. Not only have their scanty remains been thrown into the back-ground by his more voluminous

PREFACE.

writings; but, by being classed with Theocritus as *pastoral poets*, a comparison has been instituted favourable in fact to neither of the three; a comparison which seems to have produced much erroneous criticism, both with respect to these poets, and on the subject of pastoral poetry in general. Some critics, taking Theocritus as their standard, discover in the poems of Bion and Moschus a degree of refinement unsuited to the simplicity of the pastoral. By others, again, Theocritus is accused of a coarseness and rusticity in his pastorals, which these poets, and his imitator Virgil, have happily avoided. Some will not admit Bion and Moschus as pastoral writers at all; while by others the nature of pastoral is refined to such a degree of perfection and purity, that scarce any thing has been written that comes up to their ideas of it. Among those who wish to place these two writers in a class of poetry superior to Theocritus, and to pastoral itself, is Mr. Longepierre, the French translator; who observes, (comparing them with Theocritus,) that "if the writings of Bion and Moschus are not to be considered as such true pastorals, they will in general pass among judges for better poems." Mr. Pope, too, in his paper in the *Guardian* on Pastoral *,

says, that "the Eclogues of Bion and Moschus, as well as some of Virgil's, are by no means pastorals, but something better." And he wishes to extend the benefit of this mode of classification to his own pastorals, as compared with those of Mr. Philips.

The truth seems to be, that critics have in general been too *exclusive* in their ideas of pastoral; either restricting it to an imitation of real pastoral life, or carrying it to an imaginary state of innocence and purity only to be found in the golden age. Dr. Johnson, in his *Rambler**, has given what appears the most rational and logical definition of this kind of writing. He defines a pastoral to be "a poem in which any action or passion is represented by its effects on rural life." This liberal acceptance of the term (whatever be its literal import) seems to give the best general principle for distinguishing the class. It comprises, within its extensive range, the *gaudentes rure Camæne* of every rank, form and denomination; Bucolic, Dramatic, Elegiac; Ode, Song or Ballad: it classes the poems of Ramsay, Burns and Hogg (*our* Doric triumvirate) with the Canticles of Solomon. Poetry purely descriptive or didactic is, of course, excluded; not being the representation of any par-

* No. 37.

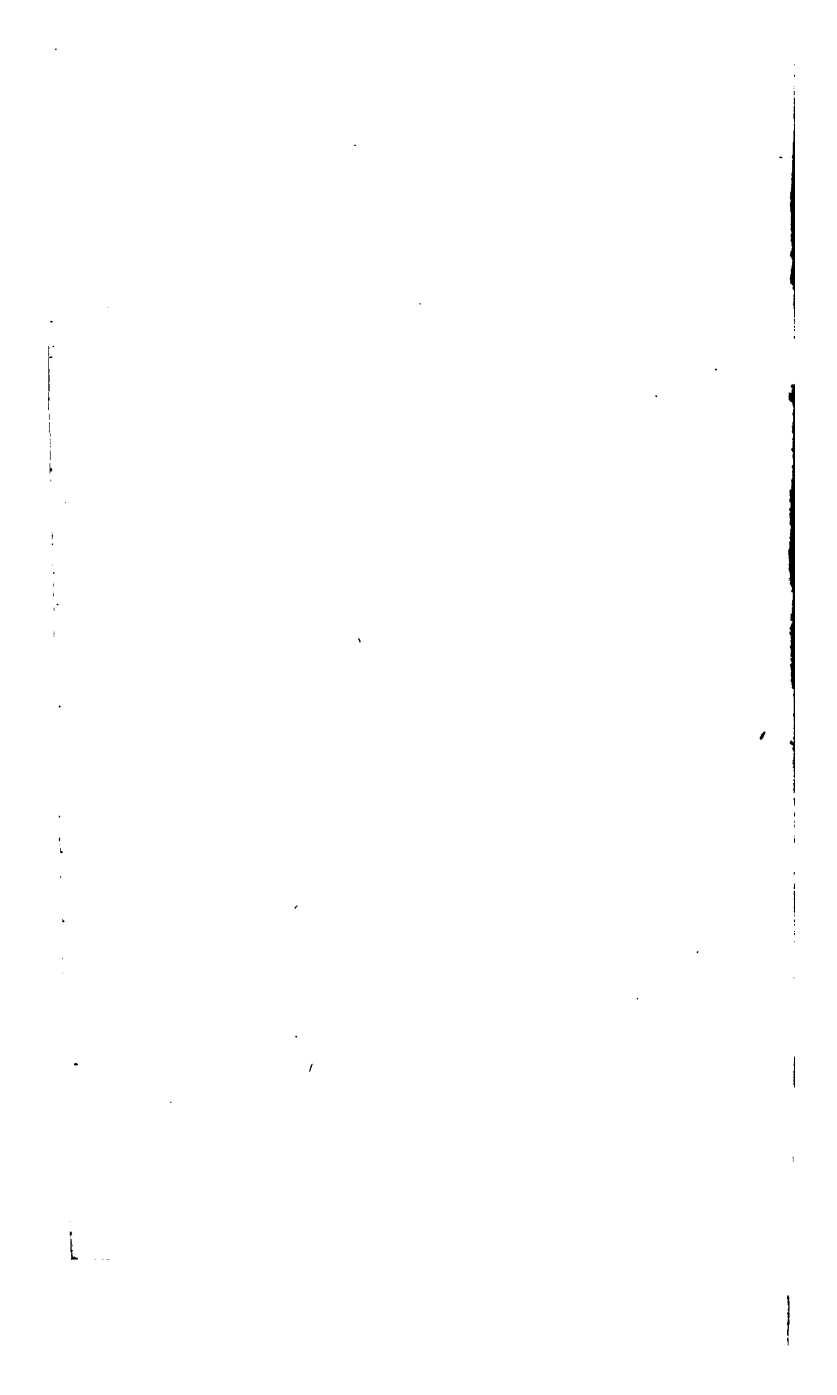
ticular *action* or *passion*. The Georgics of Virgil and Seasons of Thomson are not pastorals, though some of the episodes which they contain (the Palemon and Lavinia, for instance) may be termed pastorals. It is evident that pastoral admits of a certain degree of elevation in expressing sentiment or passion, though when manners are delineated, we expect a more exact imitation of real life: in other words, that there is in pastoral, as in the drama, a serious and comic; a sentimental and humorous. If we allow Comedy *sometimes to raise her voice*, there seems no reason why this license should not be extended to a species of writing so admirably adapted for the expression of the tender passions.

Bion and Moschus, therefore, if they are to be admitted as pastoral writers, appear to belong to a higher class of the pastoral; one that is susceptible of a certain degree of ornament, without losing its character of simplicity. It is the *simplex munditiis*; the *ferme ornée* (if we may so call it) of pastoral land. They admit of no comparison with Theocritus, because they enter into no competition with him; nor are they to be blamed for not doing what they never intended to do. Not less admirable in their way, their object was different. Theocritus, in his Bucolic Idyls, exhibits a perfect model of the pastoral. All our ideas of it, indeed, are taken from him.

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among the Latins, than Bion; unless we are to suppose that the latter has been less imitated from being *inimitable*. The *Megara* of Moschus is a dialogue between the wife and mother of *Hercules*, containing sentiments of tender affection and mutual consolation between these two personages, expressed in a manner truly feminine and dramatic. This and the *Europa* may be termed *heroic Idyls*. In these the poet deviates from the pure Doric into the more lofty Ionic dialect; thus showing, like Virgil in his *Pollio*, his intention of rising above the strain of pastoral—*paulo majora canamus*. The *Epithalamium* of Achilles and Deidamia (7th *Idyl* of Bion), had it been preserved entire, might perhaps have vied with the *Europa*. What we have of it is a beautiful specimen of this poet's talent in that kind of writing in which Ovid has so much excelled—the *love-tale*.

In their smaller pieces, these poets have all the sweetness and delicacy of Anacreon; nor are they less happy in those elegant allegorical fictions, which represent the most fascinating of all the heathen deities—the *God of love*. But for the hexameter measure, indeed, in which they are written, these poems partake more of the nature of the lesser ode or modern sonnet, than of the pastoral. They have generally, at the end, a smart epigrammatic turn, or a sententious application of the whole, like the moral of a fable.

This has a pleasing effect; giving unity to the piece, and converging, as it were, its whole force into one point. Such compositions ought not to be considered as contemptible, because diminutive in size. On the contrary, from the few that have excelled in this mode of writing, we are led to conclude that it requires an uncommon felicity of genius. To present an exquisite and complete gratification to the mind in a small compass, is surely no mean effort of art. The fewer the materials, the greater must be the skill of the workman. In music, we readily admit that there is more real genius displayed in the composition of a beautiful air or song-tune, than in the most elaborate piece of counter-point. It is the same in the sister art; a single ode of Horace or Anacreon does more honour to its author, than many of our most voluminous compositions. These poetical miniatures require, in proportion to their minuteness of size, a high finishing and delicacy of pencil. In poems of any length, occasional negligences may be overlooked; and the faults of one part are obliterated by the beauties of another. But here the whole is presented to the eye and to the mind at one view, and remains impressed on the memory at the same instant. This mode of writing, therefore, demands, more than any other, a nice symmetry of parts, a strict unity of sentiment and effect, uncommon clearness and vivacity of ex-

pression, and neatness and purity of diction. These requisites will not be found wanting in the smaller Idyls of Bion and Moschus; in which it is observable, that the latter shows more of the Anacreontic gaiety than his brother poet, whose genius seems more suited to the tender and melancholy. The 6th Idyl and concluding Epigram of Moschus have much of the airiness and vivacity of modern song.

It may not be improper to remark here, that the term Idyl or Idyllium (*ιδυλλιον*), by which these authors and Theocritus have designated their poems, has no particular reference to pastoral, but seems merely to mark such a description of poems, of no considerable length, as we would call *Miscellaneous*, without any limitation as to subject. The hexameter measure, however, seems essential to the Idyl, and, indeed, is in some cases the only circumstance that distinguishes it from lyric poetry on the one hand, and, on the other, from elegiac or epigrammatic verse.

To these general remarks on their writings, it will be expected that some account should be added of the authors themselves. All that is known of them, however, may be comprised in a very few words; for the translator will not follow the example of one of his predecessors, who has set apart a whole chapter for this express purpose, entitling it "The Lives of Bion and Moschus," merely to say that little or nothing is

known of their lives. What information we possess on this subject is chiefly derived from the Idyl or Elegy written by Moschus on the death of his friend and brother-poet. From this it appears that Bion was a native of Smyrna, a city supposed likewise to have been the birth-place of Homer; which circumstance is beautifully alluded to in the Elegy. Though an Asiatic by birth, he appears to have spent most of his life in Sicily; where Moschus, who was himself a Sicilian, became his pupil, and that friendship was contracted between these great geniuses which he has immortalized in this poem. That Bion had other pupils besides Moschus, may be inferred from another passage in this Idyl, where Moschus claims the inheritance of that art of Bucolic poetry which he taught *to his disciples*; adding, "to others thou hast bequeathed thy riches, to me thy gift of song." From this latter expression we gather another particular of his life; that *he was not in necessitous circumstances*, but possessed of property, when he died. In the accounts generally given of Bion, it is asserted that it was in Italy where he taught this school of poetry. The only foundation for this opinion seems to be a passage in this Elegy, where Moschus, after enumerating the different poets then living who lamented the death of Bion, adds, "I too sing the song of Ausonian grief." But it is well known that the term *Au-*

sonia was originally applied to the island of Sicily as well as to Italy*. And, at any rate, this expression would seem intended rather to mark the country where Moschus lamented his death, than that in which he died. From this Elegy we are likewise informed of the manner of his death, which was *by poison*; taken; not voluntarily, nor accidentally, but administered by another. Who this person was, does not appear; nor what were the motives that prompted so atrocious a deed; but it was evidently the effects of private malice or revenge, and not the consequence of a legal or judicial condemnation. This is sufficiently indicated, as well by the detestation which Moschus expresses against the perpetrator of the crime, as by his hopes of its being overtaken by speedy punishment. On what grounds Mr. Fawkes asserts that the poison was given by *the appointment of some great man*, does not appear: nor indeed is it very clear what is meant by such an expression. From the mention of Theocritus as one of the poets then living who lamented the death of Bion, we are led to the era in which he and Moschus lived; this father of pastoral poetry having flourished under Ptolemy Philadel-

* I should rather consider this expression "the song of Ausonian grief" as used to mark that particular kind of verse in which Moschus lamented his master; i.e. the Bucolic or Pastoral, being thus distinguished, by its Italian or Sicilian origin, from the native Greek poetry.

phus, who began his reign 285 years before Christ.

Moschus has left no information respecting himself, excepting the circumstance of his having been the pupil of Bion. In addition to this, we have only the brief account of Suidas, who says, that "he was a grammarian of Syracuse, the intimate friend of Aristarchus, and in Bucolic poetry the next after Theocritus." By *grammarian*, we are, no doubt, to understand, not a mere teacher of grammar, but a professor of those elegant branches of literature which we denominate the *Belles Lettres*; for such seems the real import of the word *grammaticus*. It is therefore probable that he succeeded, after Bion's death, to the direction of the school which he taught. Could we suppose the Aristarchus here mentioned to have been the celebrated critic of that name, we might well imagine that the instructions of this severe literary censor contributed no less, in forming and correcting the taste of our poet, than those of his master Bion. But it is scarcely possible he could have been contemporary both with this person and Theocritus. For Aristarchus the grammarian lived in the reign of Ptolemy Philometor, who succeeded to the throne of Egypt in the 180th year before the Christian era, that is, 105 years after Ptolemy Philadelphus, the patron of Theocritus, began his reign. Phila-

delphus's reign was long indeed; but still there is an interval of 66 years between the death of that prince and the accession of Philometor; an interval which, although it does not exclude the possibility of Moschus's having lived in both reigns, would yet throw his intimacy with Aristarchus to so late a period of his life as to render it extremely improbable, even under the most favourable supposition, that it took place about the commencement of Philometor's reign. We must therefore conclude that Suidas is incorrect, or that he meant some other person of that name, perhaps Aristarchus the philosopher, a man likewise of sufficient celebrity to render his friendship an honour. His era indeed is not ascertained, but supposed (perhaps from some internal evidence of the writings he has left behind) to have been prior to that of Archimedes, who flourished about 200 years before Christ.

But the circumstance that has most distinguished the history of these excellent poets, and almost the only one that we know with certainty, is the friendship which subsisted between them. The similarity of their genius, their common pursuit of fame in the same path, produced none of those jealousies and animosities which too often divide the most eminent literary characters. Moschus's Elegy does no less honour to himself than to the friend he celebrates; and it does equal honour to his genius and to his heart.

His expressions are those of the warmest affection, of the most enthusiastic veneration. They flow from the heart, and convince us at once that they are the effusions of real grief, and of the purest friendship: a friendship which could only be inspired, and only felt, by virtuous and amiable minds. This friendship, which united them when alive, has even gone beyond the grave, and associated them in the admiration of posterity. They will go down, hand in hand, to future ages; as long as the beautiful language in which they wrote shall continue to be understood; as long as there are hearts that can feel, or there is taste that can appreciate the graces of fine writing.

In the Notes subjoined to these poems, it has been the translator's object to explain the general nature or subject of the piece, to elucidate particular passages, or, where a different reading, or different sense from the one generally received has been adopted, to show the grounds of such deviation. A few critical remarks are interspersed, where it occurred that they might be useful or interesting; and parallel passages from other authors produced; only, however, in cases where the coincidence, whether intended or accidental, is striking, and the corresponding passages reflect mutual light on each other.

The translator does not consider it his business to point out the faults of his originals. A

few instances of false wit and affected brilliancy; of exuberance of ornament, and what are called *conceits*, may, no doubt, be found in their writings: but these, among their many excellencies, might well be overlooked by any but those who are more solicitous to discover faults than beauties. As such, the translator will leave their detection to the good taste and judgement of his readers; satisfied with not having concealed them. Mr. Polewhele has treated his authors with a severity and petulance of criticism scarcely excusable (were it even just) in a professed antagonist. It would not be difficult to show that he is mistaken, as well in the general character he gives of our poets, as in most of the instances he has adduced of what he calls *a vicious taste and a disordered fancy*; were it possible to suppose that the opinions of such a writer could have any influence on the public taste.

Mr. Wakefield's elegant and correct edition of these poets is the one which has been chiefly followed in this translation. It is formed from those of Heskin, Brunck, and Valckenaar, whose excellencies it combines, with many beautiful illustrations of his own; and has done more to purify the text of these authors than any former edition. That of Heskin (Oxford 1748) has likewise been consulted, and of Henry Stephens (Paris 1579). The former is chiefly valuable on account of its voluminous notes, which in-

clude the best of those of Longepierre, translated from the original French; and contain a large collection of imitations and parallel passages taken from other poets. From these notes whatever was considered useful or interesting has been extracted. It will perhaps be thought that the translator has adopted too many of Mr. Wakefield's emendations, which, though in general extremely happy and luminous, are sometimes rather bold. He hopes, however, it will be found that this liberty has been taken only in places where the text, as it stood, had either no meaning at all, or one that involved an absurdity. Such passages, he conceived, could lose nothing by an alteration which, without doing violence to the text, substituted perspicuity and elegance for what before was obscure or inconsistent.

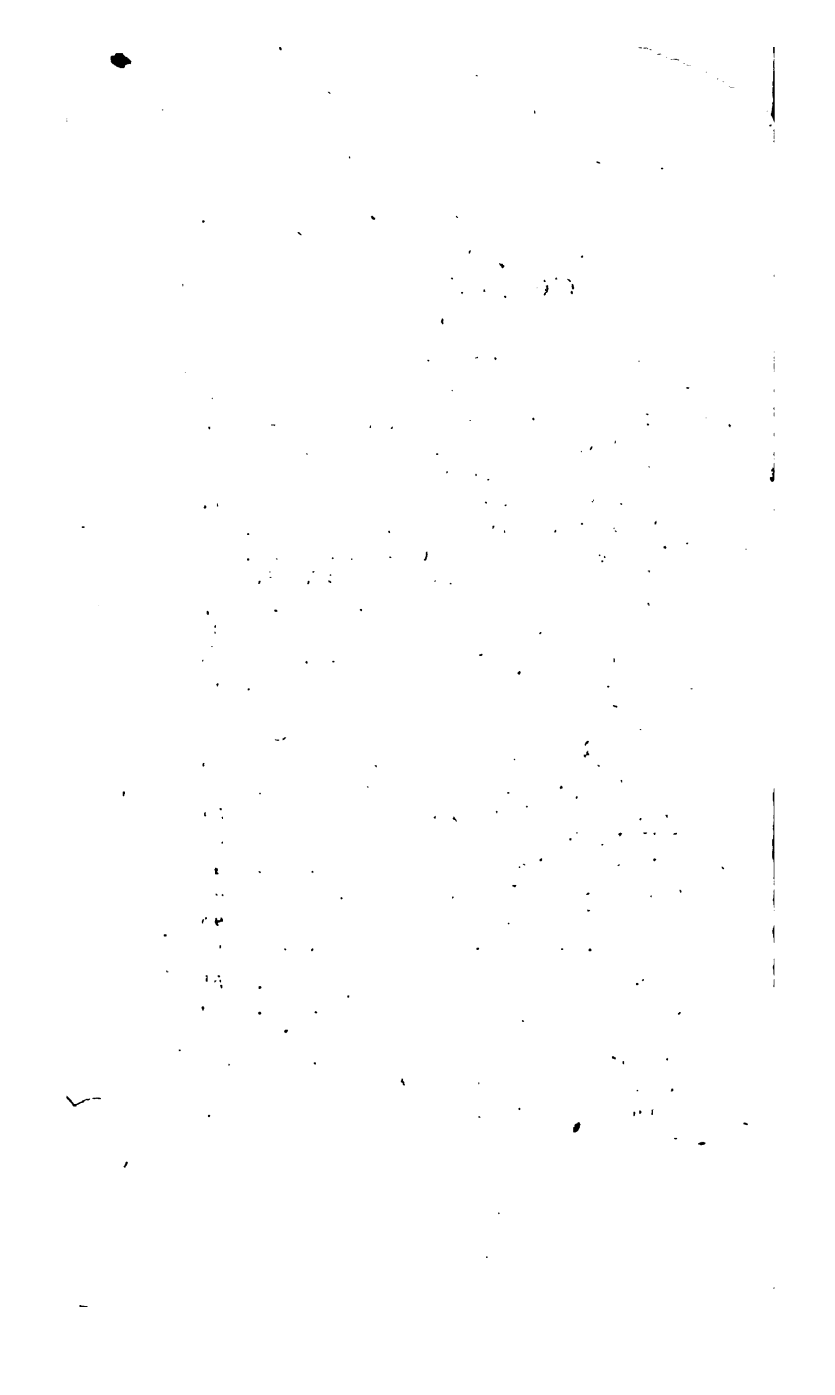
The few translations subjoined to these poems were done many years before, and are added as a sort of *make-weight* to a publication which will still be small, even with this addition, and which, indeed, was not intended to be bulky. Though not originally designed to accompany the poems of Bion and Moschus, they will be found no unsuitable appendages; being much in the manner of these poets. Ovid's Rape of Proserpine may be considered as a companion to the Europa of Moschus, and, by comparing them together, the reader will see in what manner a similar subject

has been treated by these two poets. The Narcissus of Ovid may, in like manner, be compared with Bion's Elegy on Adonis. Both these poems describe the death of a beautiful youth; yet how much more deeply is our sympathy excited by that of Adonis? Beside his deficiency in real pathos, there is a want of interest in Ovid's subject. We cannot sympathize with what we do not believe. Many young men have died, like Adonis, in consequence of a wound; but the manner and cause of Narcissus's death are improbable and unnatural. The beautiful poem which has been attributed by some to Catullus, called the "*Pervigilium Veneris*," or "Vigil of Venus," is not so well known as it deserves to be. It has, indeed, come down to us in a very imperfect and mutilated state; and, notwithstanding the corrections that have been applied by several eminent critics, is still in many parts obscure and unintelligible. Beside the obscurity arising from a corrupted text, there is an obscurity of *style*; a brevity and abruptness, assumed perhaps to give elevation to some parts of a poem which, with the form of Eclogue or Idyl, has in it something of the nature of the Hymn. Sometimes an image is just hinted, which it is necessary to expand in translation, or a glimpse of meaning must be caught at, and the deficiency supplied by conjecture. Hence translation must necessarily become in some

degree paraphrastic; more particularly where allusions occur that are not so familiar to an English reader. This poem is likewise a good deal in the manner of our Grecian poets. With more vigour of expression, it has much of that delicacy and elegant simplicity which characterize their writings: the same richness of colouring, the same luxuriance of imagery. One might almost imagine that the same pencil which painted the Goddess of love in all the distraction of grief for her favourite lover, had described her here in the pomp and splendour of a queen, surrounded by her attendant Nymphs and Graces, and amidst all the gaiety and magnificence of her festival. Had the translator seen Dr. Parnell's elegant version of this poem before commencing his own, he would not have made the attempt. Being made however, he still ventures to lay it before the public. Though without any pretensions to vie with the Doctor's in poetical merit, it will in general be found less paraphrastic; in some passages, too, where there was an ambiguity in the text which left a choice, a different sense has been adopted. It may therefore suit the taste of some readers better, and at least will be interesting to those who are fond of contemplating the same object under different points of view.

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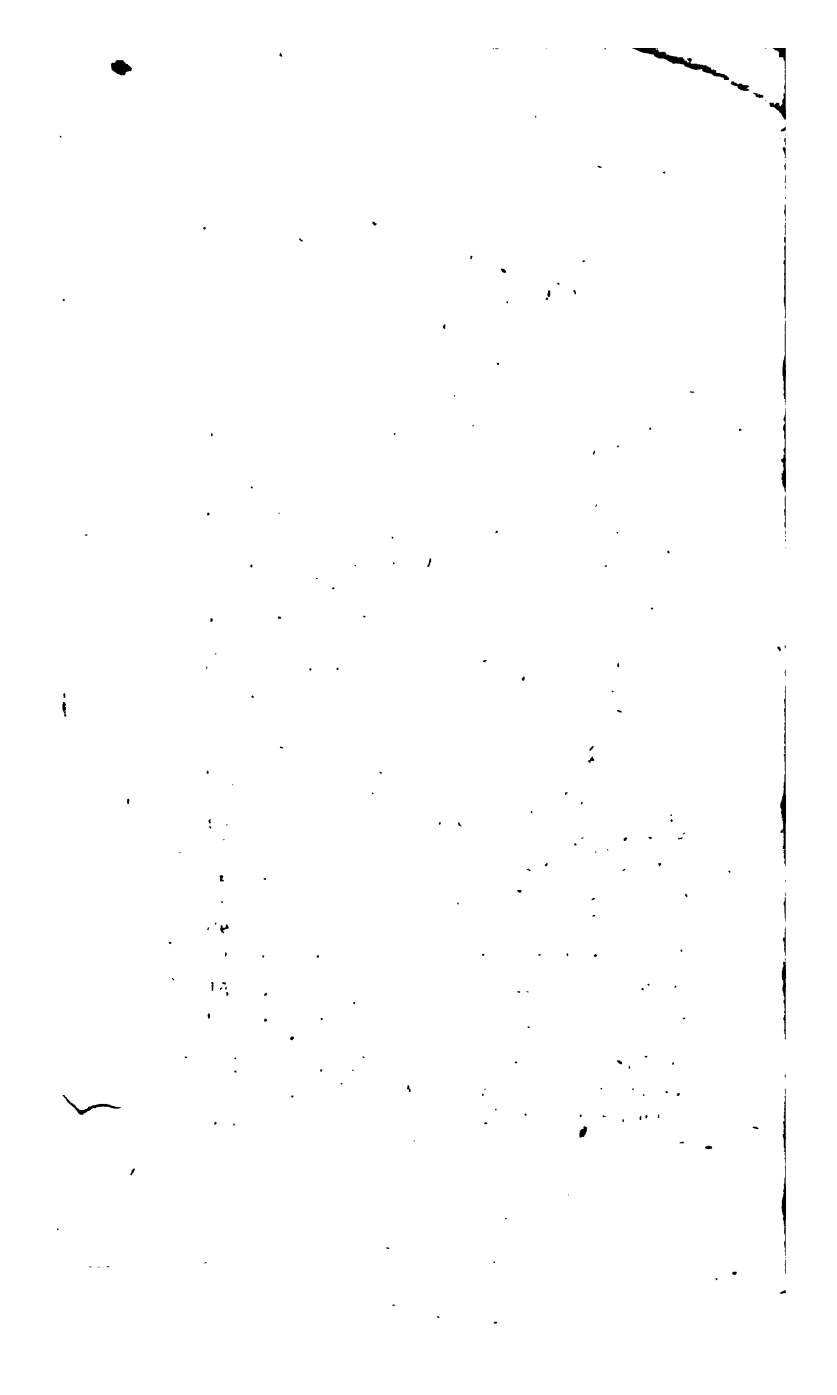


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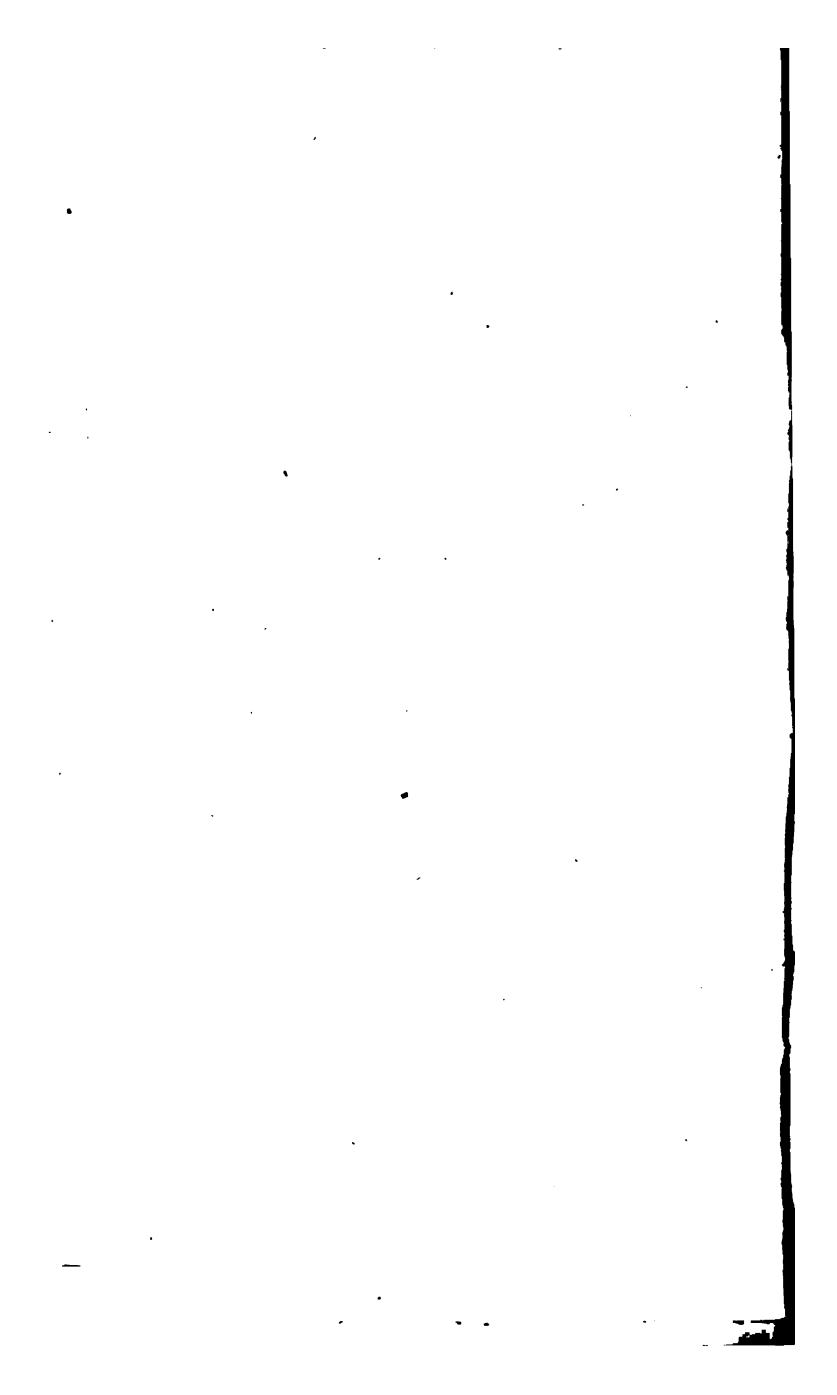


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IDYLLIUM I.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ADONIS*.

ADONIS, fair Adonis' death I mourn * !

"Adonis' death" the weeping Loves return.

Venus, no more on purple couch repose,
Rise, wretched goddess, and proclaim thy woes ;
Put on thy sable weeds, thy bosom beat, 5
And mourn, with many a tear, thy hapless lover's fate !

Adonis, fair Adonis' death I mourn ;
"Adonis' death" the weeping Loves return.
See on the hills the fair Adonis lie ;
A boar's sharp tusk hath pierc'd his snowy thigh * : 10
(Sad spectacle to Venus!) from his wound
Flows the black blood and streams along the ground.

* The Asterisks refer to the Notes at the end.

His heavy eyes, dim with the shades of death,
Lie sunk, and faintly pants his fading breath ;
From his pale cheek the rose extinguish'd flies, 15
And on his lips the kiss of Venus dies :
That kiss, repeated oft, as still it gives
A sad delight, though he no longer lives.
He all unconscious lies ; nor heeds the kiss *
Divine, nor feels the warmth of her embrace. 20

Adonis, fair Adonis' death I mourn ;
" Adonis' death" the weeping Loves return.
Deep is thy wound, sad youth, and fierce the smart,
But deeper still the wound in Venus' heart.

His faithful dogs howl mournfully around ; 25
The mountain nymphs lament in doleful sound.
Distracted through the woods see Venus fly,
Grief in her heart, and phrensy in her eye ;
Her lovely tresses loose, her feet unshod ;
While the rough brambles, by her footsteps trod, 30
As in her haste she scours the tangled wood,
Pierce her soft skin and drink her sacred blood.
Through the long vale she speeds in frantic course,
And in shrill accents her lost love deploras ;
Calls her Assyrian boy *, and far and near 35
Ranges the mountains and the forests drear.
He bleeding lies ; his iv'ry skin all o'er
Suffus'd with crimson spots and stain'd with gore ;
His beauteous breast, once whiter than the snow,
With blood all purpled from the wound below. 40

"Venus, alas!!" thy sorrows now we mourn * ;
 "Venus, alas!!" the weeping Loves return.
 From ~~thy face~~ form its grace celestial flies ;
 Dead is thy love, with him thy beauty dies.
 Those charms so bright, whilst the dear youth surviv'd,
 With grief now fade, of all their bloom depriv'd. 46
 The hills and woods Adonis' death lament,
 And murm'ring streams repeat the sad complaint :
 For grief each fountain overflows its bed ;
 For grief each flower assumes a deeper red. 50
 By every fountain, by each hill, she cries *
 (Each hill, each fountain, to her grief replies,)
 "Ah, wretched me, my lov'd Adonis dead * !"
 And Echo back returns "Adonis dead !"

But who the anguish of her soul can paint, 55
 When breathless to the fatal spot she went,
 And saw her lover stretch'd upon the ground,
 The blood all streaming from his ghastly wound !
 Around the dying youth her arms she throws,
 And wildly thus gives utt'rance to her woes : 60
 "Stay, my Adonis ! stay, dear youth !" she says ;
 "Adonis, stay ; and take my last embrace.
 But rouse thee for a moment, while I join
 Thy pallid cheek, and mingle lips with thine.
 There let me dwell as long as life remains, 65
 Take thy last kiss *, while yet that kiss retains
 Some vital warmth, and suck thy latest breath,
 Ere quite extinguish'd in the grasp of death.

That last effusion of thy parting soul
 Breathe through my lips, till it pervade the whole 70
 Of my internal frame, through ev'ry part
 Diffus'd, and, fixing, centre in my heart !
 Thus still some taste of former joys I'll prove,
 Still drink the soft enchantment of thy love.
 Within my bosom that last kiss I'll keep, 75
 As thy dear self, inviolate and deep.
 For thou, sad youth, a long and dreary way,
 Far, far from me, and from the light of day,
 Must go ; to Pluto's dark and dismal reign ;
 While, doom'd to everlasting life, in vain 80
 I wish to die, and wish to follow thee,
 Curs'd with the gift of immortality * !
 Queen of th' infernal shades, dread Proserpine !
 To thee my lov'd Adonis I resign ;
 Receive him, goddess ; now thy power prevails * 85
 'O'er mine, and ev'ry beauteous thing assails.
 But I, unhappy, widow'd and forlorn,
 In endless grief must pine, nor cease to mourn !
 And art thou gone, O dearest, best lov'd !
 And all my joys a fleeting vision prov'd ?— 90
 Extinguish now, ye Loves, your torch's flame !
 Perish, my Cestus, now an empty name ! [chase ?
 Too vent'rous youth ! why would'st thou tempt the
 Why, lovely as thou art, these savage monsters face ? "
 Thus Venus pour'd her grief. With many a sigh 95
 To Venus' grief the pitying Loves reply.

"Alas, sad Venus!" thus they weeping said;

"Venus, alas! thy fair Adonis dead!"

While thus she mourn'd, her tears unceasing flow'd
In stream as copious as her lover's blood. 100

That blood, those tears, as on the fruitful earth
They fell, did each a beauteous flower bring forth,
(Pride of the garden destin'd soon to be)
His blood the rose, her tears th' anemone.

Adonis, fair Adonis' death I mourn! 105

"Adonis' death" the weeping Loves return.

Cease, Venus, cease thy grief, and dry thy tears;
The bier's prepar'd, the funeral pomp appears.
The stately couch with fragrant leaves o'erspread*
Receives his beauteous corse, a sumptuous bed. 110
Beauteous in death, and smiling still he lies,
As if a gentle slumber seal'd his eyes.

In vestments soft as down thy spouse enfold,
And purple, such as deck'd thy couch of gold,
When he himself thy softer bosom press'd*, 115
Till, tir'd with love, he sunk in balmy rest.

Again in thought caress thy lovely boy,

And let remembrance trace each former joy.

Around the corse fresh flowers and garlands strew,
And sprinkle odours sweet and fragrant dew. 120

Alas! with him both flowers and odours fail'd;
Wither'd each flower, each odour quite exhal'd.
The Loves, a mournful band, with many a tear,
Hang o'er his corse, and flutter round the bier,

Each with his tresses shorn ; their grief they show 125
In gestures wild ; one tramples on his bow,
One breaks his quiver, one his deadly darts ;
Some round the body ply their busy parts ;
His sandals one unlooses ; one conveys
Fresh water from the spring in golden vase ; 130
One bathes his wound, and from the body wrings
All stains of blood ; one fans him with his wings *.

“ Venus, alas ! ” the weeping train still sighs.

Now Hymen’s nuptial torch extinguish’d lies,
And garlands, on the ground, torn from his brow ; 135
Mute is the nuptial song ; not “ Hymen,” now,
“ Hymen ! ” resounds ; no more these sounds of joy,
“ Alas, alas ! ” is now the dismal cry.

The Graces join in yet more plaintive lays,
And mourn th’ unhappy son of Cinyras. 140
The Muses in harmonious strains bewail *
The fair Adonis, and from death recall ;
In vain : he hears them not ; or, if he did,
He cannot come, by Proserpine forbid.

Now, Venus, cease thy grief, thy tears restrain * ;
A time shall come when they may flow again. 146

IDYLLIUM II.

CUPID AND THE FOWLER.

A STRIPLING taught t' ensnare the feather'd brood
Once through the woods his wily trade pursu'd ;
When perch'd, amidst the thickest of the grove,
On a tall Box, he spied the God of love.
Quite overjoy'd so fine a bird to see, 5
He straight prepar'd his dire machinery ;
Arrang'd his twigs, and watch'd with anxious eye,
Expecting at the lure to see him fly.
Till, vex'd to find his labour all in vain,
Casting away his twigs, an aged swain 10
He call'd (to whom the fowler's art he ow'd),
And pointed to the spot where sat the winged God.
The old man, smiling, shook his head, and said
" 'Touch not that bird, my child ; but rather dread
His near approach ; fly from him far, and bless 15
Thyself as fortunate such game to miss.
'Tis a bad bird : though, timid now and shy,
He seems to shun thee, 'tis but whilst a boy ;
When grown to manhood in thy face he'll dart,
Invade thy bosom, and possess thy heart."

IDYLLIUM III.

THE TEACHER TAUGHT.

WHILE yet a youth * I fed my lowing herd,
 One day the mighty Queen of love appear'd.
 The little Cupid in her hand she led ;
 (Bashful he seem'd, and, blushing, hung his head) }
 Then, coming near, "Take, gentle swain," she said, } 5
 " This boy ; instruct him in thy tuneful art."
 Well pleas'd was I to play the master's part ;
 And taught my pupil such rude homely strains *
 As please th' unpolish'd ears of shepherd swains :
 What deities to music lent their aid ; 10
 How Pan invented first the crooked reed,
 Pallas the pipe, Hermes the vocal shell,
 The lyre Apollo. But my lessons fell
 Unheeded on his ear ; of love he sung,
 Self-taught, and only love employ'd his tongue ; 15
 Inspir'd by love what gods and men have done,
 His mother's artful wiles, and triumphs won.
His pupil now, I sing the strains he taught,
 And those I taught to *him* have quite forgot. 19

IDYLLIUM. IV.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

THOUGH Love be cruel, yet the Muses deign
To court his smiles, and follow in his train.
If one averse to love invoke their aid,
Him they reject, nor will their influence shed :
But he whose breast with love's soft tumult heaves 5
Full inspiration from each Muse receives ;
To his clear voice mellifluous numbers throng,
And from his lips swift pours the tide of song.

A truth that's well exemplified in me ;
For, when I would some other deity 10
Or mortal celebrate, harsh is my voice,
My stamm'ring tongue all utterance denies.
But when to Love and Lycidas I raise
My simple strains, then rush the joyous lays
In rapid stream, with unresisted force, 15
And sweet as honey flows th' unlabour'd verse.

IDYLLIUM V.

LIFE TO BE ENJOYED.

WHY waste our precious labour there *
 Where labour nought avails, nor care ?
 Or strive by study to attain
 What learning yet could never gain ?
 If smooth those strains the Muse inspir'd *, 5
 Enough of glory I've acquir'd ;
 Ev'n they shall fix my future fame,
 And give me an immortal name.
 But if they're harsh, why vainly toil
 For what but waits the Muses' smile ? 10
 Had Jove or Fate to human kind
 A double term of life assign'd ;
 One to be spent in mirth and joy,
 And one in labour to employ,
 The present grief then might we bear 15
 In hopes the future joy to share.
 But since the Gods but one short span
 Of life have giv'n to mortal man,
 Wherefore, alas ! that space so brief
 Consume in labour and in grief ? 20
 Or why, in gainful arts employ'd,
 Heap riches ne'er to be enjoy'd ?

Forgetful of the bounds which Fate
 Hath set to this our mortal state ;
 That death so soon must intervene, 25
 Cut off our joys, and close the scene !

IDYLLIUM VI.

THE SEASONS.

CLEODAMUS AND MYRSON.

Cleodamus.

MYRSON, what season has most charms for thee ?
 Or spring or autumn wouldst thou rather see,
 Summer or winter ? Summer, midst his heat,
 Shows us the labours of the year complete ;
 In autumn plenty cheers the hungry swain ; 5
 Ev'n winter has his joys ; all vacant then,
 And careless, round the blazing hearth we sit,
 And laugh and sing, and all our toils forget.
 But spring perhaps thy humour most befits :
 Say, Myrson, since our leisure now permits. 10

Myrson.

To man, Cleodamus, 'tis not allow'd
 To pass his judgement on the works of God.

Each season has its charms ; but if a choice
 I were permitted, thus I'd give my voice :
 I love not summer for his scorching sun ; 15
 And autumn's sickly heats alike I shun ;
 From winter's frost and snows I shrink with fear ;
 Spring, lovely spring ! of all the circling year
 Most welcome thou ! when neither cold nor heat
 Annoys us, still serenely mild and sweet ! 20
 In spring all nature teems ; in spring the buds
 Burst from each plant, and leaves adorn the woods :
 Fragrant alike, and breathing soft delight *,
 The morning's rosy dawn, or dusky shade of night. 24

IDYLLIUM VII.

EPITHALAMIUM OF ACHILLES AND DEIDAMIA.

MYRSON AND LYCIDAS.

Myrson.

SAY, wilt thou, Lycidas, whilst idle here
 We sit, wilt thou with music charm mine ear ;
 Sing some sweet, amorous, Sicilian air,
 Such as of old to Galatea fair
 The Cyclops sung, gigantic Polypheme ? 5

Lycidas.

I'll strive to please thee : what shall be the theme ?

Myrson.

A song of Scyros (since I have my choice),
 Achilles' secret love, and stolen joys ;
 How 'mong the virgins, in soft vestments clad,
 The youth his sex belied, a seeming maid ; 10
 And how to Deidamia he resign'd *,
 Won by her 'witching smiles, his mighty mind.

Lycidas.

The royal shepherd † seiz'd the Spartan dame ;
 And with his beauteous prize to Ida came.
 Laconia rose, with indignation fir'd, 15
 And all the Grecian name in arms conspir'd ;
 Mycenæ, Elis, Sparta, all combin'd,
 Their pow'rs th' Achæans and Hellenians join'd ; }
 Each city sent her sons ; not one remain'd behind. }
 Achilles only shunn'd the glorious field, 20
 'Midst Lycomedes' royal maids conceal'd * ;
 Instead of arms, to female labours train'd *,
 And, for a sword, the distaff in his hand *.
 With virgins mix'd, a virgin he appear'd,
 Nor seem'd less female when with them compar'd. 25
 O'er his soft cheek an equal bloom was spread,
 As pure a white was mingled with the red :

† Paris.

A veil his lovely tresses did confine,
 And ev'n his gait was soft and feminine.
 But still no change his manly spirit prov'd * ; 30
 Like man he felt, and like a man he lov'd.
 By Deidamia's side he sat all day,
 And in sweet converse pass'd the hours away ;
 Would sometimes kiss her hand (by love made bold),
 And oft the labours of her loom extoll'd * . 35
 Th' enamour'd youth love's fiercest flame conceiv'd,
 Saw only her, but in her presence liv'd.
 But this was not enough : now all his care
 He bends fair Deidamia's bed to share.
 Whom thus (his purpose veiling) he address'd : 40
 " When other maidens at the hour of rest
 Retire, each with a lov'd companion goes,
 And in a sister's arms seeks soft repose.
 Then why should we, whom strictest ties unite,
 Alone and sep'rate pass the dreary night ? 45
 Both young alike, both virgins, and both fair,
 Each to the other as a sister dear ;
 Why, dearest maid, must cruel night divide
 A pair so join'd, and tear me from thy side ?
 Why must that odious wall its space object—— 50

* * * * *

IDYLLIUM VIII.

TO THE EVENING STAR.

SEA-BORN Venus' golden light,
Hesper, glory of the night !
Who excell'st each other star,
By the Moon outshone as far ;
Hesper, hail ! all glorious rise ;
Since the moon her light denies,
Setting with the setting day,
Lend thy beams and guide my way :
While to meet my swain I steal,
And to share his ev'ning meal.
No night-lurking thief am I,
Nor in wait for plunder lie ;
Led by love, thy love I sue,
Love is still a lover's due.

IDYLLIUM IX.

TO VENUS.

CYPRIAN Goddess, Queen of love !
Sea-born progeny of Jove !

Why with torment and with pain
 Vex alike both Gods and men ?
 What, O Goddess, hath enrag'd thee? 5
 Say, what bitter cause engag'd thee
 To let loose that wicked boy
 Us poor mortals to destroy ?
 Cruel urchin, bloody, fierce, .
 Void of pity and remorse, 10
 Lovely face, but flinty heart !
 Sweet thy smiles, but bitter smart
 Thy unerring shafts bestow,
 Deadly poison, endless woe ! 14

IDYLLIUM X.

FRIENDSHIP.

HAPPY those lovers, who from those they love
 A just return of their affection prove.
 Thus Theseus with Perithoüs was bless'd,
 While each dear friend a mutual flame confess'd :
 Happy in life, nor left him ev'n in death, 5
 But fondly follow'd to the shades beneath.
 Happy Orestes, who on foreign ground
 In Pylades a lov'd companion found ;
 Happy Achilles, while Patroclus liv'd,
 Happy that to avenge him he surviv'd ! 10

FRAGMENTS.

I.

ON HYACINTHUS*.

BUT Phœbus, as the bleeding youth he view'd,
O'erpower'd with grief, in silent anguish stood ;
Then tried each drug, and all his stores of art
Exhausted, to relieve the deadly smart :
Applied ambrosial balsams to the wound,
And bath'd the parts with nectar all around.
Alas ! his skill is now employ'd too late ;
For vain is med'cine to contend with Fate.

II.

In ev'ry case to seek the artist's aid
Is wrong, my friend, and speaks an idle head :
Make thy own pipe ; thy own intents pursue,
Nor ask of others what thyself canst do.

III.*

Go, gentle Love, and bid the Muses sing !
Ye Muses, in your train sweet Cupid bring !
Grant me, ye Nine, your gift of song to find,
Of song, the sweetest med'cine of the mind.

IV.*

By constant dropping water oft is known
To work a passage through the hardest stone.

V.*

Down yonder sloping path I take my way,
And, as along the sandy beach I stray,
To Galatea breathe a lover's pray'r,
And whisp'ring soft, entreat my cruel fair.
Sweet hope ! still may thy soothing balm assuage
My am'rous pain, nor quit me e'en in age.

VI.

Then leave me not unhonour'd ; for the bard
From Phœbus still shall earn his due reward ;
The meed of praise be mine, of gifts the best,
Which renders its possessor doubly blest.

VII.*

By nature beauty is assign'd
Chief ornament of woman-kind ;
To man the bold undaunted mind.

IDYLLIA
OF
MOSCHUS.

M O S C H U S.

—◆— IDYLLIUM I.

FUGITIVE LOVE.

ONCE Cupid from his mother chanc'd to stray ;
When Venus thus proclaim'd her runaway :

Whoe'er a little wand'ring boy should see,
Call'd Cupid, and will bring the news to me,
Shall have for his reward a kiss of mine ; 5
But he who brings him, something more divine.
His form and features may by marks be shown
So plain, as among twenty to be known.
Not white his skin, but of a glowing hue ;
Sparkling his eyes, and piercing to the view ; 10
Far different his language and his mind ;
His thoughts are cruel, but his speech is kind.
A honey'd sweetness from his lips distills,
But bitter is the gall his heart that fills.

For 'tis a false, deceitful, wicked boy, 15
Cruel in sport, and mischief all his joy.
Lively and bold his looks * ; soft curls o'ershade
His lovely brow, and wanton round his head.
Small are his hands, but their resistless force
Can reach to hell, and hell's grim monarch pierce : 20
Naked his body, but his mind is clad
In subtlest wiles, and close enwrapp'd in fraud.
Wings like a bird he wears, with which he flies
From place to place, and every bosom plies,
Both men and maids, till fix'd within the heart 25
He sits supreme, and reigns in ev'ry part.
A bow and arrow to the string applied
He bears, in act to shoot ; both small, but wide
Their range, and swift the fatal arrow flies,
The globe traversing and th' ethereal skies. 30
His golden quiver stor'd with bitter darts
Hangs at his side ; with these a thousand hearts
He wounds, nor spares (presumptuous boy !) ev'n me ;
From his dire shafts nor gods nor men are free.
Though small his torch, yet bright and fierce it gleams ;
His torch, which ev'n the sun himself inflames. 36
When caught, secure him well, no pity show,
Nor with his tears be won to let him go.
With many a tear he'll sue, and many a smile ;
But both are false, and feign'd but to beguile. 40
Perhaps each infant blandishment he'll try,
And seek to kiss thee ; but his kisses fly :

There's poison in his lips ; or should he strive
 To bribe thee, and his arms for ransom give,
 Touch not th' insidious gifts ; these weapons dire 45
 Dart flames at ev'ry point, instinct with latent fire.

IDYLLIUM II.

EUROPA.

A PLEASING dream the Cyprian Goddess sent
 To fair Europa for a glad portent.

'Twas now night's latest watch, and morning nigh ;
 When sweetest slumbers seal each mortal eye,
 And balmy sleep in softest fetters holds 5
 Each care-worn mind, and ev'ry sense enfolds ;
 The time when dreams of truest import reign,
 And most distinct the visionary train :
 Europa then, on her soft pillow laid,
 (Agenor's daughter *, yet a blooming maid,) 10
 In fancy saw two continents contend *
 To win her, Asia and the adverse land.
 Women they seem'd, and one appear'd to wear
 A foreign habit, and a foreign air ;
 Nature the other, urg'd a mother's claim, 15
 As having born and bred the lovely dame.
 No plea the stranger urg'd, but round her threw
 Her powerful arms, and not unwilling drew ;

For such, she said, was Jove's supreme decree,
And such Europa's fate, her prize to be. 20
All pale and trembling from her couch she sprung* ;
Around her still the airy vision hung ;
Nor seem'd a vision, but a real sight ;
Before her open eyes, reveal'd to light,
Still stood the female forms, and still pursu'd 25
Their eager contest. Shudd'ring as she view'd,
In mute amazement long she sat ; at last
She thus th' emotions of her soul express'd :

“ Whence come these visions ? What blest Deity
Hath thus in slumber deign'd to visit me ? 30
What wondrous dreams, while sunk in soft repose,
What phantoms in my troubled fancy rose !
What foreign form was that ? how she inspir'd *
My soul with love, and all my bosom fir'd !
The other, with what kind maternal air 35
She sought my love, and bade me follow her !
Ye Gods, be these to happiest omen brought ! ”

She said, and rising her companions sought ;
All maids of noble birth, of equal age,
Who oft would in her youthful sports engage, 40
Join in the lively dance, or with her lave
Their beauteous limbs in the translucent wave :
Sometimes together they would range the fields,
And pluck the flowers the fragrant meadow yields.
At her glad summons soon the lovely band 45
Appear'd, each with a basket in her hand.

Then to th' accustom'd mead their course they bend ;
 Along the shore these beauteous meads extend :
 Here oft Europa with her friends would play,
 And in sweet pastime ~~spend the~~ live-long day, 50
 Pleas'd with the flow'ry treasures which the ground
 Pour'd forth, and with the ocean's solemn sound.
 A golden basket on her arm she bore,
 The wondrous work of Vulcan, long of yore
 By him on Libya the nymph bestow'd, 55
 To grace her nuptials with the Ocean's God ;
 Who to fair Telephessa, with her join'd
 By ties of blood, the splendid gift consign'd ;
 She to Europa, in her hands to prove
 The rich memorial of a mother's love. 60
 By skill divine with various sculpture grav'd
 It shone, and beauteous imagin'd.

Express'd in gold appear'd the Inachian † maid *,
 Woman no more, in heifer's form pourtray'd.
 Swimming she seems the briny path to tread, 65
 The waves in tint cerulean round her spread.
 Her phrensied looks bespeak the œstrum's force ;
 Two shepherds on the beach observe her course.
 Jove too appear'd with gentle hand to guide
 The beauteous heifer through the foaming tide 70
 To distant Nile, there fated to resume
 Her former shape, and woman to become.

† Io, daughter of the river Inachus.

Nile roll'd in silver waves his seven-mouth'd flood ;
 Of brass the heifer, golden was the God.
 Engrav'd around the basket's tortuous rim 75
 Hermes was seen, and vanquish'd under him,
 Stretch'd on the ground and bleeding, Argus lies,
 Now clos'd in death his hundred sleepless eyes.
 A beauteous bird, arising from his blood,
 His painted plumage proudly spreads abroad ; 80
 With glossy wings expanded, graceful sails,
 Like some trim galley, and behind him trails
 His gorgeous train of thousand brilliant hues,
 Which round the golden brim their radiance dif-
 fuse.

Such was the basket of the lovely maid, 85
 By Vulcan thus adorn'd, and thus array'd.

When now arriv'd among the verdant meads *,
 Dispers'd they seek, each as her fancy leads,
 Some favourite flower : the hyacinth some pull,
 The sweet narcissus some, or violet cull, 90
 Or creeping wild-thyme. On th' enamell'd ground
 The sweets of spring lay scatter'd all around,
 And many a fragrant leaf, and flow'ret gay, }
 Amidst the rich profusion thrown away, }
 Fell from their hands, forgotten, to decay. 95
 While eager some selected for their store
 The yellow crocus, incense-breathing flow'r,
 To grace her basket fair Europa chose
 (Pride of the field) the softly blushing rose ;

Amidst the busy train conspicuous seen : 100
So 'mong the Graces stands the Cyprian Queen.

Not long, sweet maid, didst thou these pleasures
Not long untainted wear thy virgin zone ! [own* ;
Great Jove the influence of thy charms confess'd ;

Soon as he saw thee, deep within his breast 105

Rankle the shafts of all-subduing Love,
That powerful God who conquers ev'n Jove.

How shall he win the virgin's tender heart ?

How Juno's jealous rage elude by art ?

Within the semblance of a bull he veils 110

His heavenly essence, and the God conceals :

Not such as fatten in the stalls, or through

The dusty furrow drag the crooked plough ;

Not such as pasture on the flow'ry plain,

Or bend their necks beneath the loaded wain : 115

Another form he chose, a softer mould ;

Sleek was his skin, its hue resembling gold*,

Save on his forehead ; there a circlet bright

Full in the middle flam'd, of snowy white.

His sparkling eyes with heavenly radiance shone, 120

But mild their lustre, darting love alone.

Small and of equal curvature his horns ;

Bent like the silver crescent that adorns

The Moon, ere yet her lucid orb she fills,

Or half her glories to the night reveals. 125

Transfigur'd thus, he sought the fields, and stray'd
Through that fair meadow where the damsels play'd.

No terror, but delight his view inspir'd,
And ev'ry eye the lovely bull admir'd,
Whose breath ambrosial such sweet odours shed, 130
As quite o'erpower'd the fragrance of the mead.
Leaving their flow'ry task, around they press,
Eager to view him, eager to caress.
Before Europa's feet he humbly bow'd,
Lick'd her fair skin, and by dumb gestures show'd 135
His love. With virgin innocence the maid
Each fond caress with equal warmth repaid;
Wip'd from his lips the foam, and deign'd a kiss:
Melodious lowings his delight express,
Sweet as the notes of the Mygdonian flute. 140
Kneeling he bends, and seems in lowly suit
His back to tender, with beseeching eye
Wooing the maid its glossy seat to try.
Who her companions thus address'd: "My friends,
See how the courteous bull his back extends, 145
Inviting us to mount; let us employ
His offer'd service, and the sport enjoy.
For mild he seems, and of a gentle mind;
Not rude and fierce, like others of his kind;
In intellect surpassing far the reach 150
Of brutes; and, to be human, wants but speech."
She said, and smiling took her seat; the rest
Prepar'd to follow; but of her possest,
Soon as he felt his beauteous load, away
He started with a bound, and sought the sea. 155

Loud shriek'd the maid, with sudden fear appall'd,
And, turning round, her fond companions call'd,
Their aid imploring : but all aid was vain ;
For now amid the billows of the main
He, dolphin-like, his rapid flight pursu'd. 160
The sea-green Nereids, from the briny flood *
Emerging, round the God obsequious bend,
And, borne on whales, his wat'ry course attend.
The God himself who rules the roaring seas *,
And shakes the solid earth, his homage pays ; 165
His awful brother in his realm receives,
Precedes his march, and smooths the ruffled waves.
Around their God appear, in festive train,
The tuneful Tritons, minstrels of the main,
And blow from their sweet shells the Hymenæan strain. }

She, graceful, seated on the back divine 171
Of the celestial bull, the track marine
Traverses safe : while in swift motion borne,
To fix her seat she grasps his branching horn,
Her other hand adjusts her robe, and saves * 175
From foul invasion of the dashing waves.
Fill'd with the fresh'ning breeze her ample veil *
Swells out, and bellies, like a spreading sail.
While thus its influence adds increasing speed,
Amaz'd she sees her native land recede ; 180
Till, launch'd into the deep, her eyes no more
Discern the lofty hills, or craggy shore ;

IDYLLIUM III.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF BION.

YE fountains, mourn ! ye rivers, as ye flow,
 And Dorian streams, remurmur notes of woe !
 Ye flow'rs, that through the grove your sweets exhale,
 Wave mournfully, and Bion's death bewail !
 Anemones, your liquid sorrows shed *, 5
 For grief, ye roses, blush a deeper red ;
 Thou hyacinth, sad plant ! whose ev'ry leaf *
 Imprinted bears the characters of grief ;
 Those doleful sounds in more abundance show,
 And in redoubl'd sighs express thy woe ! 10
 Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive strain * !
 Ye nightingales, who to the woods complain
 Along the winding banks of Arethuse,
 Through ev'ry grove the mournful theme diffuse !
 Proclaim, where'er her silver waters glide, 15
 That Bion's dead, of all her swains the pride ;
 That Bion's dead, and that with Bion die
 The sylvan song and Doric melody !
 Sicilian Muse, the plaintive strain prolong !
 Ye swans of Strymon, raise the mournful song * ! 20
 Sweet as the echoes which your banks return'd,
 When your *own* bard † in sweetest accents mourn'd ;

 † Orpheus.

Tell the Bistonian nymphs, th' Cæagrian maids,
Our swain no more shall grace his native shades ;
Send the sad notes o'er all the neighb'ring shore, 25
And say, " the Doric Orpheus is no more ! "

Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive strain !
No more among his flocks the tuneful swain
Under an oak, reclining on the ground,
Charms with his pipe the hills and woods around. 30
By dismal Lethe now he sings, while here
The groves are mute, and languish in despair ;
While here discons'late o'er the flow'ry mead
The heifers wander, and forget to feed.

Sicilian Muse, the plaintive strain repeat ! 35
Ev'n great Apollo mourns thy hapless fate.
The pensive Fauns and Satyrs thee bewail,
And Echo mourns within her rocky cell :
Because, to silence doom'd, no more he hears
Thy voice, or mimics thy melodious airs. 40
The Nymphs with many a sigh thy death deplore,
And swell'd with tears their crystal fountains pour.
Through grief for thee all nature pines away,
The flow'rs all wither, and the fruits decay.
Through grief for thee each genial current's froze ; 45
No more the milk, no more the honey flows.
How can the bees their liquid treasures yield,
Extract that honey which thy lips distill'd ?

Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive strain !
Not thus the Dolphin in the wat'ry main * 50

Ere mourn'd, or in the grove sad Philomel ;
 Not thus did Progne fill with sighs the vale,
 Or her dear Ceyx Halcyone bewail :
 Not thus did Cerylus his love deplore,
 Or Memnon's birds along the rocky shore 55
 Send their hoarse cries, encircling still his tomb,
 As now, O Bion ! they lament thy doom.

Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive strain !
 Now mourn, for Bion mourn, ye feather'd train !
 Each fav'rite bird that flutter'd round his cot, 60
 Ye nightingales and swallows, whom he taught
 To chaunt his strains, ye cooing turtle-doves,
 Join the sad choir, and wake the vocal groves !

Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive strains !
 Who now shall touch, O best-belov'd of swains*, 65
 Thy vocal reed ? What daring hand shall try
 Its magic stop and dulcet melody ?
 Still, still it breathes, warm from thy lips divine,
 Still faintly murmurs heav'nly notes of thine !
 While Echo lurks within the hollow reeds*, 70
 Prolongs the dying sounds, and on the murmurs
 feeds !

To Pan I'll bear the reed ; yet even he,
 Perhaps, may fear to touch it after thee.

Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive strain !
 Fair Galatea mourns her fav'rite swain*. 75
 Oft by the margin of the azure sea
 She sat and listen'd to thy pleasing lay :

Unlike the hideous strains of Polypheme ;
 For thee the Nereid lov'd, but fled from him.
 Now she forsakes the wave, forsakes the rock, 80
 And o'er the plain collects thy scatter'd flock.

Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive strain !
 No more the Muses' sacred gifts remain.
 With thee the gentle loves of youth expire,
 The glowing kiss, the blush of soft desire. 85
 The little Loves hang weeping o'er thy tomb,
 And Cytherea's self laments thy doom * ;
 Adonis' death yet in her mind she bears,
 And that *last kiss* still living in thy verse.

To thee, most musical of streams that flow ! 90
 Meles, to thee arise new scenes of woe * !
 Thy Homer died, sweet bard ! whose mouth divine *
 Calliope inspir'd, and all the Nine ;
 And then, 'tis said, thy waters did resound
 With thy sad plaint, and all the shores around. 95
 Now for another son thy tears are shed,
 Another son, another poet dead :
 By fountains both alike belov'd ; for one
 Drank the pure stream of sacred Helicon, }
 While Arethuse refresh'd thy later son. } 100
 That sung Achilles' wrath, and Helen's charms,
 The bold Atridæ, and the Grecian arms :
 A softer theme thy later bard pursu'd,
 Nor sang of war, nor painted scenes of blood ;

To rural Pan he tun'd his simple strains, 105
 And sung the artless loves of shepherd swains.
 Singing he drove his flock along the meads ;
 Or milk'd his kine, or join'd th' unequal reeds.
 But chief of love, and love's delights he sung,
 Love warm'd his bosom, and inspir'd his tongue : 110
 Oft in his breast the little Cupid play'd,
 And Venus with a smile her bard survey'd.

Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive lay.
 A thousand cities, Bion, mourn for thee.
 Not more did Ascrea for her Hesiod mourn, 115
 Or Thebes bedew with tears her Pindar's urn ;
 Or Ceos sweet Simonides bewail,
 Or for Alcæus weep the Lesbian isle ;
 Not more the Parians their lost bard † desire ;
 Ev'n Mitylene forgets her Sappho's lyre. 120
 Thy fate, O Bion ! ev'ry bosom mourns *
 That with the Muses' sacred ardour burns :
 Sicelidas, the pride of Samian swains,
 And Lycidas, whose mirth-inspiring strains }
 So late enliven'd the Cydonian plains, 125
 No more rejoice ; but change their mirth to tears,
 And turn to mournful elegy their verse.
 The Carian bard Philetus mourns for thee,
 And sweet Theocritus of Sicily.

† Archilochus.

I too to thee my doleful numbers raise, 130
And sing my master in Ausonian lays.
If aught my art, to thee that art I owe,
Not quite unskill'd the past'ral pipe to blow.
To other heirs thy riches may belong ;
To me thy Doric reed and gift of song. 135

Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive strain !
Alas ! the various plants that deck the plain *,
Though soon they fade, and shed their lovely flow'rs,
Yet Spring returns, and all their bloom restores.
But we, the great, the valiant and the wise, 140
Soon as relentless death hath clos'd our eyes,
Unheard, forgotten, in the dust consume,
And sleep for ever in the hollow tomb !
Thou too art mute ; while meaner bards rejoice,
No more outrivall'd by thy sweeter voice. 145

Sicilian Muse, the plaintive strains repeat !
And was it poison, Bion, caus'd thy fate ?
Could poison touch those lips unchang'd, nor feel *
The sweetness there, and lose its pow'rs to kill ?
What savage wretch could mix the deadly grains, 150
Unsoften'd by the magic of thy strains ?

Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive lay !
But justice shall the bloody deed repay.
Meantime for thee my tears unceasing flow.
O that like Orpheus to the realms below, 155
Or great Alcides, I could penetrate !
(If such my pow'r or such the will of fate)

How pleas'd the bleak Tartarean plain I'd tread,
 And seek my friend among the silent dead !
 Perhaps at Pluto's throne I'd hear thee sing, 160
 And with sweet music charm the grisly king.
 Oh sweetly warble some Sicilian air !
 So shall his Proserpine delighted hear ;
 For she once sported in Sicilian plains,
 And well she knows to chaunt the Doric strains. 165
 Nor shall thy music unrewarded be :
 If Orpheus could his lost Eurydice
 Redeem by the sweet accents of his lyre,
 And pity in the Goddess' breast inspire ;
 Mov'd by thy strains, she may our bard restore, 170
 And send thee back to grace our hills once more.
 If aught my feeble numbers might prevail,
 I too would try to soothe the powers of Hell.

IDYLLIUM IV.

MEGARA—THE WIFE OF HERCULES.

WHY, mother, thus, with anxious cares oppress,
 Nourish perpetual sorrow in thy breast ?
 Why does thy frame decay, thy strength consume,
 Thy cheeks no more retain their wonted bloom ?
 Mourn'st thou the fate of thy illustrious son, 5
 Condemn'd through labours infinite to run

His painful course ; and, more his gen'rous soul
To grieve, beneath a dastard's base controul ?
As if the lion serv'd the timid hind :
What yoke more galling to a noble mind ! 10
Ah me unhappy ! born to be the spite
And scorn of heaven ! why did I see the light ?
Why did my parents nurse with tender care,
But doom'd this endless weight of woe to bear ?
Since that ill-fated man first call'd me wife, 15
Whom still I love and honour, dear as life.
Of mortal race none more unblest than he,
Or deeper drank the cup of misery :
Who with that bow by Phœbus' self bestow'd *,
Or rather by some Fury, not a God, 20
His children slew : O most accursed deed !
These eyes beheld it ; saw my children bleed
Beneath their father's hand ! (in frantic mood
Furious he rag'd, and fill'd the house with blood)
Saw at his feet my helpless infants fall, 25
Heard them for succour on their mother call !
Alas ! my feeble succour, then too late,
Had made me but the partner of their fate ;
And, as the mother-bird, with piteous cries *,
Bewails her infant-brood before her eyes 30
By the fell pangs of some huge serpent torn ;
Around the spot, in airy circles borne,
She flies, and sees their fate, but cannot aid ;
Nor dares approach them, by her fears dismay'd ;

Distracted thus I roam'd the mansion wide, 35
Thus, wretched mother ! for my children cried.
O would to heav'n the same envenom'd dart *,
That slew my babes, had pierc'd their mother's heart !
Or, Dian, thou that aid'st a woman's throes,
Hadst with thy shafts reliev'd me of my woes ! 40
Then had my parents paid with many a tear
Our common rites, and laid us on one bier ;
In the same urn consign'd our dust to earth,
And buried in that soil that gave us birth.
My parents now the peaceful grave contains * 45
In Thebes, sad tenants of th' Aonian plains ;
Whilst I, within Tyrintha's walls immur'd *,
For ever weeping mourn my absent lord ;
Who now, a wand'rer o'er the earth and main,
Through many a labour drags his life of pain ; 50
Of soul unshaken by th' assaults of ill,
Hard as the flint, and stubborn as the steel.
But thou, alas ! too well partak'st my woe.
Thy tears, incessant, like a fountain, flow ;
What kind consoling friend have I but thee 55
To cheer my solitude and misery ?
What guardian to protect my widowhood,
So far remov'd from those of my own blood ?
Beyond the Isthmus far their dwelling-place,
Here only Pyrrha owns a common race. 60
But she, oppress'd with sorrows of her own,
Laments Iphicles thy ill-fated son *,

Her spouse, like mine, the sport of adverse fate ;
And thou of mothers most unfortunate,
In bearing sons doom'd to misfortune dire, 65
Whether of mortal, or immortal sire !

Thus spoke Megara, whilst a bitter flood
Fell from her eyes, and her soft cheeks bedew'd ;
Her babes rememb'ring, and her parents dear.
Alcmena too, suffus'd with many a tear, 70
With a deep sigh that rent her lab'ring breast,
Her daughter thus in soothing words address'd :

Why, best of daughters, thus my grief renew * ?
Why still untir'd this gloomy theme pursue,
Alike distressing both thyself and me 75
By telling o'er each dire calamity ?
What boots it past misfortunes to deplore,
And all those ills so often wept before ?
Are not the griefs we ev'ry day sustain
Enough, without the weight of former pain ? 80
Alas ! 'tis but a wretched task to count
Our sum of woe, nor needs the black amount
Be swell'd by fancy, or by mem'ry's aid !
But weep not, dearest child ; be comforted.
Think not the Gods have doom'd these things to last ;
Then hope the future, and forget the past. 86
Too long hast thou indulg'd excessive grief,
Too long have both ; 'tis time we sought relief.
Well mayst thou grieve indeed, and well may I ;
Yet ev'n in mirth there is satiety*. 90

How I lament that thou so large a share
In those intolerable woes shouldst bear
Which Fate has heap'd on my devoted head !
For (witness ye whom perjur'd mortals dread,
Ceres and Proserpine !) my love for thee, 95
Dear child, is such it could no greater be
Not hadst thou been the fruit of my own womb *,
My only hope, and in thy virgin-bloom.
But well, I trust, is my affection known
To thee, nor needs it now in words be shown. 100
Then think me not regardless of thy woe ;
Did ev'n my tears in more abundance flow
Than Niobe's ; yet who my grief can blame ?
A mother's tears may sure indulgence claim.
So dear a son can I enough deplore * ? 105
Whom ten long months within my womb I bore ;
Whose birth, ere yet he drew the vital breath,
Brought me, his mother, to the gates of death ;
Such bitter pangs of travail I sustain'd :
Who now far distant in a foreign land, 110
His arduous task still fated to pursue,
Fresh toils achieves, and labours ever new :
If ever to return, if ever more
These eyes shall see him, all his labours o'er,
I know not ; but some dire mischance, I fear, 115
Threatens my sons, some fatal mischief near.
For lately slumb'ring in the dead of night,
A hideous vision fill'd me with affright.

Methought I saw my Hercules employ'd,
With spade in hand, a trench of compass wide 120
To dig; inclosing with capacious bound
A fruitful field that blossom'd all around.
Naked he toil'd, like some day-lab'ring swain;
His garments lay beside him on the plain.
At length, his work to full completion brought, 125
And the rich vineyard circled by its mote,
He stuck his spade in the projecting mound,
And stoop'd to take his garments from the ground;
When suddenly from the deep trench burst forth *
Devouring flames, and pour'd along the earth. 130
Around my son the fiery deluge spread;
Before its rage with hasty steps he fled;
While, as the scorching flame behind him blaz'd,
Against its force his massy spade he rais'd,
His naked limbs protecting, like a shield, 135
And pointing still where'er the foe assail'd.
Iphicles, then, with eager haste, methought,
Ran to his aid; but ere he reach'd the spot,
Slipping, he fell, and prostrate on the plain
Lay stretch'd, without the power to rise again. 140
Like some old man that stumbles in the way,
Tott'ring with age, and faint in life's decay,
And lies, till by some friendly hand uprear'd,
Pitying his hoary hairs and silver beard.
Thus motionless, thus helpless, on the ground 145
Iphicles lay, but no deliv'rer found.

To see my sons in this distressful state,
 With grief I wept, and ~~scrambled~~ for their fate ;
 When sleep my eyelids left, and morning bright,
 The shades dispersing, show'd her purple light. 150

Such was my dream ; and may the pow'r that sent
 Far from my sons avert the dire portent !
 What evil it imports, O may it all
 On him, the tyrant, on Eurystheus fall !
 May his just doom my soul prophetic prove, 155
 And expiate the wrath of Heav'n above !

IDYLLIUM V.

THE CHOICE.

THE azure wave when zephyrs gently sweep,
 And scarcely stir the bosom of the deep,
 I loathe the land, and seek the liquid plain :
 But when, to mountains swell'd, the raging main
 Tempestuous heaves, and foaming billows roar, 5
 I shun the stormy sea, and love the shore.
 Earth's verdure then is pleasing to my sight,
 And leafy woods and shady groves delight.
 Through the tall pine though winds impetuous howl,
 Its hollow sighs are music to my soul. 10
 Hard is the fisher's life ; his toil the sea,
 A bark his home, and fish his slippery prey.

But me sweet slumbers please, securely laid
On the soft grass, beneath the plane-tree's shade ;
Whilst at my feet a bubbling fountain flows, 15
Whose gentle murmurs lull me to repose.

IDYLLIUM VI.

CAPRICIOUS LOVE.

For Echo sighs Arcadian Pan,
While Echo loves the dancing Faun ;
The dancing Faun for Lyda burns ;
Thus all are lov'd and love by turns.
As Echo's charms the God inflame, 5
So her the Faun, and Lyda him.
Thus are these four so strangely mated,
They only love where they are hated ;
By those they love alike despis'd,
By those they hate alone they're priz'd, 10
Return the scorn which they receive,
And suffer all the pain they give.
This simple truth then let me tell
To lovers so untractable :
" If kind to those that fancy you, 15
Then those you like will love you too."

IDYLLIUM VII.

ALPHEUS.

ALPHEUS, am'rous stream, his waters pours,
 With olive-garlands crown'd, to Pisa's shores;
 There deep beneath the main his course pursues,
 While nuptial gifts to his lov'd Arethuse,
 Sweet leaves, and flowers, and sacred dust* he brings,
 To greet the fairest of Sicilian springs. 6
 Swift through the waves his silver current glides
 Unseen, nor mingles with the briny tides.
 Thus love, great master! working wonders still,
 Hath to a river taught the diver's skill. 10

EPIGRAM.

CUPID TURNED PLOUGHMAN.

ONCE Cupid, assuming the dress of a clown,
 His torch, and his bow, and his quiver laid down,
 And with scrip at his shoulder, and goad in his hand,
 Drove his oxen along, as he furrow'd the land.
 When thus the sly rogue, looking up with a smile, 5
 "Now, Jove, be propitious, and prosper my toil;
 Give plentiful increase and make the corn grow,
 Or I'll yoke thee, Europa's great bull, to my plough."

NOTES.

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NOTES ON BION.



IDYL I.

"ALL the beauties and graces that can embellish a poem are to be found united in this Idyllium. The utmost elegance of style and sentiment, passion alike vehement and tender, uncommon felicity and delicacy of expression ; in short, every thing in poetry that can charm or captivate the mind, strike the reader at once. The ear is agreeably soothed by a musical selection of words, a graceful arrangement, and pleasing and sweet variety of numbers. Wherefore the best critics of every age have deservedly ranked this Idyllium among the most perfect remains of antiquity."

Such (through the medium of Mr. Heskin's Latin translation) is the eulogium which Mr. Longepierre bestows on this Idyllium : an eulogium so just and so well expressed, that it would be unfair to give it in any other words. But among the beauties of this poem, its excellence *as a description* ought not to have been omitted ; for it is *descriptive* as well as *elegiac*, and owes much of its pathos to the faithfulness of that description. Our sympathy is not ex-

cited by mere sentiment or lamentation : the affecting scene is set before our eyes, and our pity follows as the natural effect of such a spectacle. The death of Adonis is painted with such delicacy, yet truth of colouring, and with so many circumstances of genuine pathos, that it melts the heart into all the tenderness of real woe. The grief of Venus gives animation and interest to the picture ; and, by the lively manner in which it is delineated, adds the beauty of dramatic effect and of character. Her lamentation over her dying lover is a most natural and pathetic effusion of grief. All the agony of mental suffering ; all the warmth, and all the tenderness of love, are expressed in this affecting speech. Nor is the voluptuousness of the Goddess of love forgotten. Amidst her grief, she dwells with delight on the pleasures of the last kiss ; and would prolong even the sensual enjoyment of her favourite beyond the term of his life.

What adds much to the pathetic effect of this piece is, that the poet, through the whole of it, appears to participate in the distress which he is describing, and to feel himself that sympathy which he would excite in his readers. His fine sensibility is more particularly displayed in those tender apostrophes to Venus, which are occasionally interspersed. They break the narrative very agreeably, while they awaken the attention of the reader and heighten his interest. A pleasing and mournful effect is produced by the repetition of those simple expressions of woe, so affecting from their very simplicity,

Αἰ αἰ τὰν Κυθέρειαν—ἀπώλετο κάλος Ἀδωνίς—κ.τ.λ.

Striking the ear at intervals, it seems as if we heard them

repeated from the different bands of mourners, the Cupids, the Mountain Nymphs, replying to each other; or echoed from one part to another of the wild and mountainous district where the scene is laid. The description of the couch and the little group of Cupids fluttering around it, is the painting of a rich and elegant fancy. These little beings are so multiplied by the arrangement of the verse, that they actually appear to swarm, while bustling around the body, and performing their last friendly offices to the deceased. The mourners behind are represented in the most picturesque attitudes of grief. In fine, every thing in this admirable poem contributes to the general effect of the whole, and to keep up that enchantment in which we find ourselves while reading it; combining all the beauties of sentiment and of description; all that can charm the ear and delight the imagination.

“ ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ADONIS.”

In the original, this Idyllium is entitled “The Epitaph of Adonis;” as the third Idyl of Moschus is called “The Epitaph of Bion.” The term Epitaph, however, has so different an acceptance in English, that I preferred that of Elegy; which is likewise the denomination by which both these poems are generally known. In Greek, indeed, the term Elegy (Ελεγίον) seems exclusively applied to poems written in alternate verse, hexameter and pentameter; hence called *elegiac* verse. But by us any poem of a mournful or plaintive nature is termed an Elegy, whatever may be its particular form or measure.

Ver. 1. *Adonis, fair Adonis' death I mourn!*

"Adonis' death" the weeping Loves return.

These lines are to be thus understood; the first, as the lamentation of the poet; the second, as the response given by the Cupids, who echo back the words of his complaint.

WAKEFIELD.

Ver. 10. *A boar's sharp tusk hath pierc'd his snowy thigh.*

In the original,

..... μηρον οδοντι

Λευκῇ λευκον οδοντι τυπτεις.

"His white thigh wounded by the white tooth of a boar."

The sin of this miserable conceit, or play of words, must, we fear, remain with our poet, notwithstanding the pains that commentators have taken to explain it away. Mr. Heskin proposes to read *λυγρῇ* instead of *λευκῇ*: that is, instead of saying *white* tooth, to say *fatal* tooth. But the resemblance between these two words being more in pronunciation than in external form, was not so likely to have misled a copyist. Besides, *λευκος*, *white*, seems the natural epithet applied to *tooth*, and applied almost as an expletive. Mr. Wakefield only says, *has repetitiones adumant poetæ*; and cites some passages from Virgil and Ovid, where the same adjective, but in different cases, is used with two different substantives. But it is not the *repetition* that is faulty, but the manner of applying it, and the subjects to which it is applied. For the same repetition which has elegance in one case, may in another be per-

fectly ridiculous. When we are told of a man "throwing a *great* stone with *great* force*," we are sensible that the *greatness* of the stone, and the *greatness* of the effort, mutually assist each other, and combine in producing one effect. The repetition of the word *great*, therefore, and juxtaposition of the two adjectives (*magnum magno*) give vigour and energy to the expression. But the *whiteness* of the boar's tooth and the *whiteness* of Adonis's thigh have no mutual relation whatever, and neither co-operate with, nor counteract, each other. This is merely an accidental resemblance, which presents to the reader no idea whatever but a frivolous one. Mr. Wakefield's other instances are analogous to this, being all repetitions of the word *agnus*.

The only thing that can be said in favour of the poet is, that *white* is an epithet so commonly applied to *tooth*, that it almost ceases to be an epithet; and he might therefore have used it without adverting to the tautology, or implied antithesis. But the artificial arrangement of his words, and the repetition of the word *οδορι*, are, I am afraid, but too evident marks of design. So that we can only say with Mr. Heskin, *Utinam Bion non ita scripsisset!*

Ver. 19. *He all unconscious lies; nor heeds the kiss. &c.*

"Adonis did not know that Venus kissed him," says the original. There is something in this simple expression which impresses us more strongly with the horrors of death than the most elaborate description. Longinus says, "there

* See Ovid Met. iii. ver. 60.

is, on some occasions, a sublimity in *silence*:" and there is certainly something nearly allied to it in this total negation of feeling and of sense, this cold insensibility of the dying youth, which even the kiss of Venus could not re-animate; particularly when contrasted with the agitation and over-excitement of the Goddess herself.

Mr. Fawkes has not preserved this idea. Instead of it, he has only this reflection:

"But all her kisses cannot warm the dead."

Ver. 35. *Calls her Assyrian boy*

Adonis was the son of Cinyras and Myrrha. Cinyras, according to some authors, was a king of Assyria; according to others, of Arabia. Homer calls him king of Cyprus.

Ver. 39. *His beauteous breast, once whiter than the snow,
With blood all purpl'd from the wound below.*

Among the instances of *vicious taste* which Mr. Polwhele draws up in formidable array against our poet, is the contrast here exhibited between the whiteness of Adonis's skin and the blood by which it was disfigured. The imputation of a *vicious taste* may, I think, in this instance, be justly retorted on the critic. So far from being *vicious*, this is the most natural and affecting contrast that can be presented to the reader: it is not the mere contrast of *colour*; it is the contrast between a present and a former state; between the bloom and vigour of youth and of health,

and the deformity of a ghastly wound : it is the contrast, in short, between life and death. It is such a contrast as that which makes Æneas exclaim, on beholding the squalid ghost of Hector, (while the image of the same Hector, at the head of his troops, carrying fire and sword into the Grecian camp, was fresh in his remembrance,)

Hei mihi ! quantum mutatus ab illo
Hectore, &c.

Ver. 41. *Venus, alas ! thy sorrows now we mourn ;
" Venus, alas !" the weeping Loves return.*

Αἰ αἰ τῶν Κυβερταῶν—αἰ τὸν Ἀδωνί—κ.τ.λ.

These, and other such exclamations, which occur repeatedly in this poem, seem allusions to the rites of Adonis ; being part of the lamentation sung by the women in these solemnities. In the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes, a woman is represented dancing in the celebration of these rites, and singing *Αἰ τὸν Ἀδωνί*, "Alas, Adonis !"

This annual festival in honour of Adonis was celebrated with great pomp in many parts of the East ; in Syria, Egypt, and even among the Jews ; as well as in Greece and the Greek colonies. From the many allusions to it which occur in this *Idyllium*, it seems not improbable that the poem itself was composed for this occasion.

Ver. 51. *By every fountain, by each hill, she cries.*

I have adopted Mr. Wakefield's emendation of this passage, wherein the words *καὶ ἀνα πτόλιν*, and in the city,

had puzzled commentators, and led them to the most absurd of all conjectures—that the poet had started off from the real history, and was alluding to the rites of Adonis. This was only justifying an absurd reading by a still more absurd explication. For, surely, it would be to the full as ridiculous for the poet to fly off all at once from his description of the real event, to an allusion to the rites afterwards instituted in commemoration of it, as to suppose, according to the literal acceptance, that Venus had actually left her lover bleeding to death in the desert, and had run to the city to lament him. Mr. Wakefield, for *και ανα πτολιν*, and in the city, reads *ανα παν νεκος*, by every fountain; an emendation which, whether correct or not, certainly substitutes sense for nonsense. The Aldine Theocritus, however, bears him out half-way at least in his conjecture. This edition (printed in 1475), in which the poems of Bion and Moschus first made their appearance, has *ανα παλιν απο*; which, by a slight alteration of letters, gives the reading which Mr. Wakefield has so ingeniously supplied. The *και ανα πτολιν* must, therefore, have been a conjectural emendation, intended to correct the *ανα παλιν* of the Aldine text; which indeed is not very intelligible.

Ver. 53. *Ah, wretched me, my lov'd Adonis dead!*
And Echo back returns, "Adonis dead!"

I was tempted to hazard this deviation from the laws of rhyme, from a wish to preserve the echo in the original: the effect of which would have been lost by being transferred to the beginning of the verse.

Ver. 66. *Take thy last kiss.*

It is strange that commentators, in remarking on this passage, will sit down gravely and tell us that this *last kiss*, and the catching of the last breath of a dying friend, was a *custom* observed among the ancients, and considered the duty of the person nearest in blood or affection, &c. As if these beautiful lines, which glow with such ardour of passion and voluptuousness, were nothing but the mere description of a *ceremony*, the cold and formal observance of an established usage! Mr. Heskin (in a note which he gives as jointly his own and Mr. Longepierre's, but chiefly from the latter,) says, "Besides the natural sense of this verse, there is another *far more beautiful*. The poet alludes to that last kiss which it is the *custom* to give to a beloved friend who is dying. This kiss is considered one of the most sacred *duties* which are to be performed to the dying: and the ancients, along with the last breath of an expiring friend, believed that they also received his soul," &c. I doubt most readers will prefer the *natural* sense (as these gentlemen call it) to this, which is certainly any thing *but* natural. So far from its being *the more beautiful* sense of the two, in my opinion the passage would lose the whole of its beauty, could we for a moment suppose this action of the Goddess dictated by any thing but the most ardent affection. Such a supposition would, indeed, throw cold water over the whole of this pathetic speech. This last kiss, which at first originated in affection, had, no doubt, degenerated into a custom, and been practised where no affection existed, merely as a ceremony or duty; in like manner as weeping, in some countries, forms a part of the funeral rites. But,

at any rate, what have the Gods and Goddesses to do with customs and usages established among men?

Ver. 82. *Curs'd with the gift of immortality.*

Venus regrets that immortality which divides her from the object of her love, and dooms her to an eternity of misery. This sentiment, so characteristic of the grief of an immortal, we find in various other poets, whom Bion has at least the merit of anticipating, if he had not that of suggesting it.

Thus Virgil (Speech of the Nymph Juturna in lamenting her brother Turnus):

Quò vitam dedit æternam? cur mortis adempta est
Conditio? possem tantos finire dolores
Nunc certè, et misero fratri comes ire per umbras.
Jam immortalis ego. *Æneid* xii. 879.

Ovid (the river God Inachus bewailing his daughter Io):

Nec finire licet tantos mihi morte dolores:
Sed nocet esse Deum: præclusaque janua leti
Æternum nostros luctus extendit in ævum.

Met. i. *Fab.* 14.

Spenser, in his *Faery Queene* (Speech of the Sea Nymph Cymoent):

Oh! what avails it of immortal seed
To been ybred, and never born to die?
For better I it deem to die with speed,
Than waste in woe, and wailful miserie.

B. iii. *Cant.* 4.

And Fenelon, in the commencement of his *Telema-
chus* :

“ Calypse ne pouvoit se consoler du départ d’Ulysse.
Dans sa douleur elle se trouvoit *malheureuse d’être immor-
telle.*”

Ver. 85. *Receive him, Goddess ; now thy pow’r prevails
O’er mine, and ev’ry beauteous thing assails.*

Proserpine here represents Death, that general destroyer
of beauty. Catullus seems to allude to this passage in his
beautiful Sonnet on the Death of Lesbia’s Sparrow :

*At vobis male sit, malæ tenebræ
Orci, quæ omnia bella devoratis.*

In this little piece there is evidently a sly allusion to
Bion’s Adonis, something in the nature of parody ; as if
insinuating a comparison between this feathered favourite
of his mistress and the favourite of Venus. His commence-
ment,

Lugete, Veneres, Cupidinesque,

seems a ludicrous imitation of the beginning of this *Idyl-
lium* : and this line,

Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum,
of the

Φινυγίς μακρὸν Ἀδωνί, καὶ ἐρχεται εἰς Ἀχέρουττα

But thou, sad youth, a long and dreary way
Must go, to Pluto’s dark and dismal reign.

Ver. 109. *The stately couch with fragrant leaves o'erspread,
&c.*

The description of the couch seems taken from the rites of Adonis. In the 15th Idyl (or Syracusan Women) of Theocritus, where these rites are described, a couch is mentioned as prepared for Adonis, and another for Venus.

Ver. 115. *When he himself thy softer bosom press'd,
Till, tir'd with love, he sunk in balmy rest.*

In the original, *ἵππον ἐμολχθῆ*: an elegant and singular expression, "which," says Heskin, "nocturnas Veneris et Adonidis voluptates castissimis verbis designat." It cannot be expressed in English with the same delicacy. Horace has happily imitated, or rather translated it,

..... non Siculæ dapes
Dulcem elaborabunt soporem.

Book iii. Ode 1.

Our Milton speaks in plainer terms. See *Paradise Lost*, ix 1044.

Ver. 123 to 127. *The Lones, a mournful band . . .
. . . one tramples on his bow,
One breaks his quiver, &c.*

Thus Ov'd, *Amor. i. El. 9.*

*Ecce puer Veneris fert eversamque pharetram,
Et fractos arcus, et sine luce facem.*

Ver. 132. . . . *one fans him with his wings.*

The Cupid fanning Adonis with his wings is a circumstance happily imagined, and gives a beautiful and picturesque finishing to this pretty little group. The original says "fans him *from behind*." We are to imagine this winged Deity standing, or rather hovering in the air, at the head of the couch, and directing the refreshing breeze from behind on the face of the dead youth; while his little brothers, employed in their friendly offices about the body, entirely occupy the space around it. The idea seems taken from Anacreon, who in his 7th Ode represents Cupid as forcing him to run a race with him; and, when the poet was fatigued and ready to faint, fanning him with his wings.

Κραδίη δὲ βίβλος ἀχρεῖς
 ἀνέβαινε, καὶ ἀπὸ πτερόων.
 Ὅδ' ἔρω, μετὰ πασσίων
 ἀπαλοῖς πτεροῖσιν, κ. τ. λ.

Ver. 141. *The Muses in harmonious strains bewail
 The fair Adonis, and from death recall.*

This had been in former editions *Μοῖραι, the Fates*; which Mr. Wakefield has altered to *Μοῖσαι, the Muses*. Mr. Heskin has proposed this alteration, but retained the old reading in his text. A correction so obvious did not require the long note which he adds in vindication of it. The Fates were never known as *musical* Goddesses; and *recalling from the dead* is quite the reverse of their function.

Ver. 145. *Now, Venus, cease thy grief, thy tears restrain;
A time shall come when they may flow again.*

The original says, "Thou mayest mourn *another year, or next year,*" alluding to the next annual celebration of the rites of Adonis, which would take place on the anniversary of that day. It is rather extraordinary that Mr. Fawkes should miss a meaning so obvious, and give the last line thus:

Reserve thy sorrows for the *mournful year.*

And how does he explain this? "The time appointed for mourning by the ancients," he says, "was ten months, which was originally the year both of the Greeks and Romans," &c. This, therefore, was the *mournful year*; and this year of ten months commenced, we must suppose, from the death of the person mourned. If so, there was no *reserve* in this case: Venus did not *reserve* her sorrows (according to this explication), but *continue* them during the *mournful year*, or year of mourning. But the poet evidently calls upon the Goddess to *suspend* her sorrows, not to *continue* them, for another year.

IDYL II.

The minor poems of Bion and Moschus have been preserved by Stobæus, a voluminous compiler of what we might term *Elegant Extracts* from Greek writers, both in prose and verse, arranged under different heads, so as to compose a sort of code of morality. We are indebted to

him for many valuable fragments of Greek poets, whose works have been lost.

Spenser has imitated this Idyllium in his *Shepherd's Calendar* (Month of March).

IDYL III.

Ver. 1. *While yet a youth*

I have here followed Mr. Wakefield's text, who substitutes, from a conjecture of Herelius, *εφηγοοντι*, whilst a youth, for *εθ' ύπνοοντι*, whilst asleep. That the poem is meant not as a *dream*, but as an *allegory*, is, I think, evident. Excepting the word *ύπνοοντι* (expunged by this alteration), there is nothing here that indicates a dream. The circumstances are related in the common style of narrative; not as *appearances*, nor accompanied by the terms generally used in describing a dream, *methought*, *it seemed*, &c. As a simple allegory, the poem has certainly more beauty. It is likewise more in the manner of our author, and of Anacreon, whom he seems to follow in his smaller pieces. The preceding Idyl is an allegory of this kind, representing the power of love; and Anacreon has many beautiful Odes on the same subject in the form of allegory.

In this Idyllium the poet has very happily delineated the influence of love in refining and softening the rudeness of his pastoral lays. The gradual and insidious manner in which that influence is acquired, is figured under the image of a child, whom he receives as a seemingly modest and

tractable pupil ; but who by degrees gains the ascendancy over him, and becomes his master and instructor. The season of youth being that in which this powerful passion begins to be felt, and exerts its most absolute sway over the heart, the poet's representing himself at that period of life will appear proper, and give a consistency to the reading now adopted. Bion intimates by this elegant fiction that his poems are dictated and inspired by love.

Ver. 8. *And taught my pupil such rude homely strains
As please th' unpolish'd ears of shepherd swains.*

Εγὼ δ' ὅσα βωκολιασδὸν νηπιος, κ. τ. λ. *quæ pastoralia carmina stultus* (vel stultè) *canebam, ea Amori docebam.* Such seems the proper sense of this passage, which Mr. Fawkes thus *elegantly* translates :

I, sure I was an idiot for my pains,
Began to teach him old Bucolic strains.

But νηπιος, *stultus*, is evidently connected, not with *docebam*, but with *canebam*. The poet does not call himself a *fool* for teaching Cupid to sing ; but modestly styles himself a *child* or a *novice* in the art of singing. " Such pastoral airs," he says, " as I *rudely* or *ignorantly* sung, I taught to Cupid." Such seems the import of the word νηπιος in this passage.

Mr. Fawkes is so fond of the truly *Doric* simplicity of this couplet, that he gives us almost a repetition of it a few lines afterwards :

I (sure the simplest of all shepherd swains)
Full soon forgot my *old Bucolic strains*.

According to this translation, the poet calls himself

doubly foolish: first, for *teaching* Cupid; and next, for being taught *by* Cupid, so as to neglect his pastoral lays for *the lighter lays of love*. But this is far from the intention of the poet; who rather glories in being the pupil of Cupid, and considers his rustic strains as improved and refined by the instructions of that God.

IDYL IV.

The power of love is again illustrated and exemplified by the poet in his own person. The union of Love with the Muses has been often celebrated by the poets. Under this figure they have typified the strict analogy and consent which subsist between this tender passion and the elegant arts of poetry and music.

Shakespeare says,

The man that hath no music in himself,
And is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, &c.

What our poet affirms is nearly the converse of this proposition. The man who is insensible to the passion of love, must be equally so to all the benevolent affections and kinder charities of our nature. Such a man can have *no music in himself*; no perception of beauty or excellence in any of the fine arts; much less is he qualified to excite those sensations in others. To pursue the description of our English poet:

The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.

It is with reason, therefore, that the Muses are represented as turning with disgust from the invocation of such a man, and withholding their inspiration from him. It seems as if our poet would insinuate here not merely the analogy, but the *identity* of the poetical flame with that of love; and intimate that it is the same principle in our nature which renders us susceptible of both these impressions. Hence love becomes the peculiar province of the poet; and it is in celebrating this tender passion that his strains flow with that spontaneous ease and vigour which is beyond the reach of art. The poet declares himself so wholly engrossed and absorbed by this delightful theme, that he can sing on no other subject. Anacreon in his first Ode makes the same assertion, but not with equal truth. Bacchus claims at least an *equal* share with the God of love in the strains of the jolly old bard.

IDYL V.

Ver. 1. *Why waste our precious labour there, &c.*

This Idyllium is evidently not entire; but rather the fragment of one the commencement of which is lost. The three first lines are obscure, and appear to have a reference to something that went before. Mr. Wakefield has restored the introductory verse from Stobæus,

Οὐκ' οἶδ' οὐδ' ἐπείκειν, ἃ μὴ μάθομεν ποιεῖσθαι—

which had been omitted by former editors, probably from not seeing clearly what connexion it had with the sequel. Mr. Heskin, though he omits it in his text, has inserted

this line in his note; and renders it thus: "*hæc quæ non didici, nunc tandem discere serum est*," "those things which I have not learned, it is now too late to learn:" a sense which to me appears to express neither the literal meaning of the words, nor the intention of the author. To think any period of life too late for the acquisition of knowledge, is a sentiment unworthy of Bion, and more suited to the careless indolent levity of Anacreon than to a poet of his grave sententious cast. The following is the sense which I had adopted before seeing Mr. Heskin's interpretation, and since find no reason to alter: "It is needless (or improper) to labour in those things which are not acquired by study;" such as *poetry*, which is the gift of nature or of heaven. The moral intention of our poet, therefore, seems to be, not to condemn *all* labour, but only that which is employed in unprofitable pursuits; among which he reckons the prosecuting vain studies, and heaping up superfluous riches. In the lines immediately following he applies this general maxim to his own particular case: "If my verses are good," says he, "those which the Muse has already bestowed (*i. e.* what I have already written) will alone be sufficient to secure my future reputation; but if they are bad, why should I continue to labour?" Without a natural genius for poetry, he considers that labour will be of no avail; and that this want of genius is sufficiently indicated by the want of beauty in the verses.

After all, we may fairly suspect, with Mr. Wakefield, some corruption, as well as deficiency, of the text in this passage. It has neither the usual elegance nor perspicuity of our author. In short (according to the critical cant), *Bionem non sapit*.

Ver. 5. *If smooth those strains the Muse inspir'd, &c.*

Here, as in a former instance (Id. I. ver. 141) *Μοῖρα*, *Fate*, in the old editions, has been altered to *Μοῖσα*, the Muse. Mr. Heskin retains the old reading, and vindicates it (with some show of reason, it must be confessed) on the authority of Horace, who says,

Spiritum Graiæ tenuem Camœnæ
Parca non mendax dedit.

Book ii. Ode 16.

But this is not exactly a case in point. It is his *genius* for poetry which Horace claims as the gift of Fate; but the verses themselves, not the talent for composing them, are what is here mentioned. Now, although the ancients, as absolute fatalists, believed all the accidents of life, as well as mental qualities and endowments, to be derived from Fate or Destiny; yet the strains of the poet have ever been supposed to flow from the bounty and immediate inspiration of the Muses.

It is singular that Henry Stephens, in his edition of 1579, though he retains *Μοῖρα* (*Fate*) in his text, yet, in his metrical version of this Idyl, subjoined to the literal one, renders it *Musa*. The passage runs thus:

Scita quidem mea sunt si carmina, sat mihi laudis
Sola vel illa ferent quæ jam dedit antea *Musa*.

IDYL VI.

Ver. 23. *Fragrant alike, and breathing soft delight,
The morning's rosy dawn, or dusky shade of night.*

"*In spring the night is equal to men, and so is the morning,*" says the original. Equal in *temperature*, I should suppose, not in *duration*; for this is not the case in spring more than at any other season: equally *serene*, equally *pleasant*. But, from Mr. Fawkes's translation, we should imagine that spring were a perpetual equinox:

And spring makes equal night and equal day.

Even the equinox, however, is not peculiar to spring, as there is one likewise in autumn.

IDYL VII.

The rest of this beautiful Idyl (probably the most considerable part of it) is unfortunately lost. It breaks off at a very interesting moment, and the reader feels curious to know how the poet would have conducted this delicate subject, which seems so well fitted for displaying his masterly powers in delineating the passion of love. Statius has treated it at large in his *Achilleid*, and in a manner that does him no discredit as a poet; but what we have in Statius will not compensate for what we have lost of Bion.

Besides this mutilation, the poem has suffered much from corruption of the text; and it has been still more

cruelly mangled by those who attempted to repair its defects. After all, many passages are still defective, and evidently not what the author wrote. So that it looks now like a fine piece of old painting, in which certain parts that were defaced have been retouched by some modern hand.

Ver. 11. *And how to Deidamīa he resign'd,
Won by her 'witching' smiles, his mighty mind.*

This passage in the original has been altered no less than five or six different ways by different editors. Mr. Wakefield, whom I have followed, is the happiest in his emendations as to the sense; but he takes great liberties with the text.

Ver. 21. *'Midst Lycomedes' royal maids conceal'd.*

Lycomedes was king of the island of Scyros. Thetis, dreading a prophecy which declared that her son would fall in the Trojan war, intrusted him, disguised in female attire as her daughter, to the care of this prince, to be educated along with his own daughters.

Ver. 22. *Instead of arms, to female labours train'd.*

Statius thus describes Deidamia instructing Achilles :

*Ipsa quoque et validos proferre modestius artus
Demonstrat, reficitque colos ; et perdita durā
Pensa manu. Achilleid, B. i. v. 570.*

And Achilles thus complaining of his own effeminate life,

Ast ego pampineis diffundere brachia thyrsis,
Et tenuare colos (pudet heu tædetque fateri) !
Jam scio.—v. 624.

Ver. 23. *And for a sword, the distaff in his hand.*

The old editions, instead of a *distaff*, had put a *broom* into Achilles's hands. Mr. Heskin, who highly resents this indignity done to a princess and the daughter of a Goddess (in setting her to *sweep the floors*), adopts the alteration proposed by Scaliger, of *καρον*, a *distaff*, for *καρον*, a *broom*. This alteration is certainly judicious: but when the learned commentator goes on, in the same line, to alter the word *φαίβετο* to *ύφαίβετο*; and, instead of "he *appeared* like a girl," to say "he *waved* like a girl," in order to make it still more conformable to the new reading, he has gone further than was necessary. The effeminate appearance of Achilles being particularized in the line immediately following, this general statement of it comes in here with perfect propriety.

Ver. 30. *But still no change his manly spirit prov'd,
Like man he felt, and like a man he lov'd.*

In former editions this had been *θυμον δ' Αρης ειχεν*, "he had the mind of Mars." Mr. Wakefield has followed the very ingenious and happy conjecture of Lennepius, *αρεος* for *Αρης*; an emendation which, indeed, turns darkness into light, and gives strength and energy to what was before

flat and insipid. The poet having in the preceding lines described the effeminacy of Achilles's appearance, and showed how much he resembled a *woman* in every outward respect, adds, "but he still retained the *mind* (or the *spirit*) of a *man*."

There can be little doubt that it was originally so written, and that the absurd reading generally adopted is a corruption. It is only wonderful that an antithesis so obvious and so beautiful should have remained so long undetected.

Ver. 35. *And oft the labours of her loom extoll'd.*

This passage has likewise given rise to a variety of conjectures; and seems indeed to have been supplied entirely by conjecture; the original manuscript having been defective or unintelligible. Among these, we are rather surprised to find Mr. Heskin defending so strange a reading as this: "he raised (lifted up) her *fair body*, and praised her *beautiful tears*!" These are his words: "The poet says, that Achilles, in embracing Deidamia, lifts her up and keeps her for some time suspended in the air in his arms, which custom is not unusual with young men embracing their mistresses with some degree of ardour!" This rough mode of courtship, though suitable enough to the real character of Achilles, was rather too vigorous an exertion of strength for his assumed one of a female; which, the learned editor seems to have forgotten, he had not yet laid aside. The poet describes him, in the line before, only venturing so far as to kiss her hand. So sudden a transition as this would have betrayed his sex too soon, and defeated his purpose.

I have followed Mr. Wakefield's text in this passage,

who has admitted the emendations of Scaliger and Lennepius; but I am by no means confident that it is the true reading.

Statius prettily enough describes the gradual advances of Achilles, in his courtship of Deidamia, from the playful fondness of a girl to the warm caresses of a lover:

..... illam sequiturque, premitque,
 Improbis illam oculis iterumque iterumque resumit,
 Nunc nimius lateri non evitantis adhæret;
 Nunc levibus sertis, lapsis nunc sponte canistris,
 Nunc thyrsos parcente ferit: modo dulcia notæ
 Fila lyrae, tenuesque modos, et carmina monstrat
 Chironis, ducitque manum, digitosque sonanti
 Infringit citharæ: nunc occupat ora canentis,
 Et ligat amplexus, et mille per oscula ludit.

IDYL VIII.

This pretty little invocation of the Evening Star is by some editors inserted among the Idyls of Moschus.

It is generally considered as coming from the mouth of a female, who is slipping quietly in the dusk of the evening to visit her lover. The following imitation by an Italian poet is cited by Mr. Longepierre:

Vaga, amorosa stella,
 A cui null' altra pari in ciel risplende,
 Né si leggiadra il suo bel lume accende,
 Mentre ch' al sen della mia donna torno,
 Al soave ricetto
 Scorgendonmi ti mostra fida duce.

IDYL X.

This is probably a fragment, as Mr. Heskin observes. It is imitated by Ovid in his *Epistles* (*de Ponto*, B. ii. Epist. iii. 41.)

Cerne, quid Æacides post mortem præstet amico :

Instar et hanc vitam mortis habere puta.

Pirithoum Theseus Stygias comitavit ad undas :

A Stygiis quantum sors mea distat aquis ?

Adfuit insano juvenis Phoceus Orestæ :

Et mea non minimum culpa furoris habet.

FRAGMENTS.

I.

This Fragment seems part of an Idyl on the Death of Hyacinthus, the favourite of Apollo, who was killed by an accidental blow from a disk or quoit thrown by that God. Moschus probably alludes to this poem, when, in the commencement of his *Elegy* on Bion, he calls upon the hyacinth to lament the death of that bard. The fable of Hyacinthus is related by Ovid, *Met.* B. x. Fab. 6.

III.

The union of Love and the Muses, that sacred tie, that band of roses which knits these powers together, their mutual attraction, and the reciprocal influence which they have on one another, are again beautifully touched upon in

this Fragment ; which is probably part of an Idyl on this subject, something similar to the fourth.

IV.

This proverb has been often versified. Thus Ovid :

Quid magis est durum saxo ? quid mollius unda ?

Dura tamen molli saxa cavantur aquâ. *A. V. I. 475.*

And, in another place,

Gutta cavat lapidem non vi, sed sæpe cadendo. *Sent. IV. 10. 5.*

And Tibullus :

Longa dies molli saxa peredit aquâ, &c. *I. IV. 18.*

V.

This appears to be the Fragment of an Idyl on the story of Galatea ; and may, as Mr. Fawkes observes, have been part of a speech of Polyphemus. This beautiful Nereid and her gigantic lover have been often celebrated by the Sicilian poets. They have had still greater honour done them in modern times by the divine strains of Handel. Moschus perhaps alludes to this or some other Idyl on the same subject, when, in his Elegy on Bion, he represents that poet as the favourite of Galatea, and introduces her lamenting his death.

VII.

Bion seems to have taken this idea from Anacreon's second Ode,

Φυσίς κερατά ταυροίς

Οπλὰς δ' ἔδωκεν ἵπποις

Τοίς ἀνδράσι φρονήμα—κ.τ.λ.

Mr. Heskin considers that the interpretation given by two of Anacreon's commentators (Barnes and Baxter) of the word *Φρονημα* in the above passage, is confirmed by this Fragment. These gentlemen, jealous, perhaps, for the honour of the ladies, will not allow that Anacreon meant to assign them any inferiority, in point of *understanding*, to the other sex. They contend that *Φρονημα* is to be understood here as signifying, not *wisdom* (according to the common acceptance of the word), but *courage*, or *military virtue*; and that this was the quality which that poet intended to represent as the distinguishing characteristic of the male sex. However this may be, the authority of Bion can do nothing in the present case. He might *imitate*, without *copying*, Anacreon. In adopting his general idea, he might choose to celebrate a different virtue as the peculiar distinction of man: since both these virtues have (with what justice I shall not say) been considered as marking his pre-eminence over the softer and more amiable sex.

NOTES ON MOSCHUS.

IDYL I.

WE are here presented with a picture of the God of love, painted with much liveliness and delicacy of colouring, and with no less truth as an allegory. The occasion is happily imagined. By an ingenious and pleasing fiction, the little God is supposed to have absented himself from his mother ; who, in her search for him, proclaims him in the manner usually done by the public crier for a runaway slave, with a description of his person, the marks by which he may be known, and a notification of the reward to be given to the informer or bringer of the fugitive. This elegant little poem (which Mr. Heskin very justly calls *dulcissimum Idyllium et omnibus elegantius et gratius refertum*) has been universally admired ; a proof of which we have in the many imitations, translations, and allusions to it, which we have by poets of every nation and of every age.

Among these, the Italians seem to be the most conspicuous ; as the poem itself is much in the style of writing peculiar to poets of that nation. Tasso has been particularly happy, not so much in imitating, as in catching and

enlarging upon the original idea of Moschus, in a manner not unworthy of that poet himself. In the Prologue to his *Aminta*, he introduces Cupid in the dress of a shepherd; who, we find, has fled from his mother and conceals himself from her search under that disguise. The reason he alleges for this secession from maternal authority is feasible enough :

Io da lei son constretto di fuggire,
 E celarmi da lei, perch' ella vuole
 Ch' io di me stesso, e de le mie saette
 Faccia a suo senno : &c.
 ella mi segue,
 Dar promettendo a chi m' insegna a lei
O dolci baci, o cosa altra più cara,
 Quasi io di dare in cambio non sia buono
 A chi mi tace, o mi nasconde a lei,
O dolci baci, o cosa altra più cara,
 Questo io so certo almen, che i baci miei
 Saran sempre piu cari a le fanciulle,
 Se io, che son l'Amor, d'amor m'intendo ;

" I am obliged to fly from her, and conceal myself, because she wishes to dispose of me and of my darts at her sole will and pleasure, &c. She follows me, offering to whoever will bring her tidings of me, *sweet kisses, or something else more sweet* ; as if I were not able to give to those who will conceal me, or not inform against me, *sweet kisses, or something else more sweet*. This at least I am certain of, that my kisses will be the most pleasing to the young girls, if I, who *am Love*, know any thing of love."

Tasso has likewise a poem written expressly in imitation

of this Idyl, entitled "Amore Fugitivo," in which he makes Venus thus express herself :

Ditemi, ov' è il mio figlio?
 Chi di voi me l' insegna
 Vo, che per guiderdone
 Da queste labra prenda
 Un bacio quanto posso
 Conderlo più soave :
 Ma chi me l' riconduce
 Dal volontario esiglio,
 Altro premio n' attenda,
 Maggiore, &c.

There is a very pretty Madrigal of Marini on this subject, cited by Mr. Longepierre, in which the poet tells Venus to look in his heart, and she will find Cupid there :

Non languir, bella Dea,
 Se vai cercando Amore,
 No l' cercar, dammi il bacio, *io l' ho nel core.*

Another Italian imitator tells the Goddess, she will find him in his mistress's eyes :

Dammi il promesso bacio,
 O fà ch' ella me 'l dia,
 L' ha ne' begli occhi suoi la donna mia.

This latter idea we find in an Epigram of Meleager in the Anthologia, likewise written in imitation of this Idyllium ; where the poet, in the midst of his description of Cupid, breaks off abruptly, as if perceiving him, and exclaims, " But look, yonder he is ! Aha, little archer, you

have not escaped me ; I see you in Zenophila's eye." This lively little turn concludes the Epigram very happily.

Our Spenser has an allusion to this poem in his Faery Queen :

It fortun'd, fair Venus having lost
 Her little son, the winged God of love,
 Who for some light displeasure which him crost,
 Was from her fled, as flit as airy dove,
 (So from her often he had fled away,
 When she for aught him sharply did reprove,)
 And wander'd in the world in strange array,
 Disguis'd in thousand shapes, that none might him
 bewray.

Him for to seek, she left her heav'nly house, &c.

And searched ev'ry way, through which his wings
 Had borne him, or his track she might detect :

She promist *kisses sweet*, and *sweeter things*
 Unto the man that of him tidings to her brings.

Book iii. c. vi. st. 11.

Politian has given a Latin version of this Idyllium, which is both elegant and literal. It is inserted in Henry Stephens's edition. Menage, in his edition of the Aminta, cites two other imitations of this poem by Sannazarus and Giraldus Cinthius, both in Latin. The former is an Epigram commencing thus :

Quæritat huc illuc raptum sibi Cypria natum ;
 Ille sed ad nostri pectoris ima latet.
 Me miserum ! quid agam ? durus puer, aspera mater.
 Si celam, &c.

The poet deliberates with himself whether he shall conceal the little God, who had taken refuge within his heart, or give him up to his mother. In either case he foresees unpleasant consequences. If he betrays him, he dreads the vengeance of this implacable Deity; but he apprehends no less danger in harbouring so mischievous an inmate. He determines at last to conceal Cupid, but invokes his mercy in consideration of this service.

Ergo, fugitive, lates; sed parcius ure, &c.

Such are the ingenious conceits by which poets have sought to diversify and improve upon this elegant fiction.

Ver. 17. *Lively and bold his looks.*

There is a peculiar delicacy in the original here, which it is not easy to preserve in English. Mr. Fawkes renders it thus:

“He has confident looks, and an insolent air.”

But this is too strong. The *ισταμον το προσωπον*, which Moschus gives as the expression of Cupid's countenance, if I rightly apprehend it, is neither *insolence* nor *impudence*, but the petulance of a lively forward child; a certain brisk, roguish vivacity of expression, at that age not unbecoming, as marking a quickness and precocity of intellect. The word *protervus* in Latin seems exactly to express this idea; and he who can feel the charm of that *grata protervitas* which Horace* admired in his mistress Glycera, as render-

* Ode xix. Book 1.

ing her beauty so attractive and *piquante*, will easily understand the expression of countenance here meant ; an expression not harsh or repulsive (as an *insolent* air would imply), but which gives a peculiar sweetness and fascination to the features of this infantine Deity. The English word *saucy* has something of this meaning ; and it is observable that we often use this word in addressing a child, as a term of endearment or fondness.

IDYL II.

This Idyllium has been inserted in the earlier editions of Theocritus, as one of his poems. Fulvius Ursinus, however, says, that in two very ancient manuscripts which he saw, one in the Vatican, the other in the Medicean Library, the Europa is ascribed to Moschus. The fact seems to be, that in the earlier editions, all the Greek pastoral writings were originally published under the general name of Theocritus.

In this Idyllium Moschus has shown powers equal to a much higher class of poetry than the pastoral. The fable of Europa has, indeed, entitled him to a rank among the most distinguished heroic poets of Greece. It abounds with such striking beauties of description, of style and versification, that we cannot but regret it should be the only specimen that has come down to us of his talents in this mode of writing. Nothing can better attest the merit of this poem, than the many imitations, as well general as of particular passages, which we have of it by poets of the first

eminence. Ovid's fable of Europa may be called an elegant translation of Moschus, so far, at least, as it goes; for he has not taken all the circumstances. Claudian, in his Rape of Proserpine, has evidently formed his fable on the model of the Europa of Moschus. Though not a *verbal* imitation, it is more circumstantially exact even than Ovid's. Horace has done still greater honour to our poet, by introducing the story of Europa, where not necessarily directed to it by the nature of his subject, into one of his Odes, as an episode or embellishment: in doing which he has given a sort of epitome of this Idyllium, arranged and modelled into the lyric form; and it is curious to observe how finely he has varied the form, while he has strictly preserved the substance, of his original. These two elegant imitations shall be inserted in their proper place. Ovid, in his fable of Proserpine, has taken only one circumstance from this Idyllium, the *gathering of flowers*; which he has therefore judiciously omitted in his Europa. Nonnus, an elegant Greek poet of the later ages, and a frequent imitator of both our poets, has likewise borrowed largely from this Idyllium in treating the subject of Europa.

Ver. 10. *Agenor's daughter.*

Europa was the daughter of Agenor, king of Tyre. Agenor was likewise the father of Cadmus, who brought letters into Greece, and built the city of Thebes.

Ver. 11. *In fancy saw two continents contend
To win her; Asia and the adverse land.*

By the *adverse*, or opposite land, Europe is meant; which had then no name, but was afterwards so denominated from Eutropa herself.

Ver. 21. *All pale and trembling from her couch she sprung,
Around her still the airy vision hung;
Nor seem'd a vision, but a real sight, &c.*

The dream of Medea is told by Apollonius Rhodius (*Argon.* i. 633.) with circumstances very similar to this.

The strong impression made by a dream, which continues after waking, with a conviction of its reality, is well described by Virgil, where he represents Æneas as seeing in his sleep the images of his Penates, or household Gods, standing before him, and where it is not unlikely he had this passage in his eye:

Talibus attonitus visis, ac voce Deorum,
(*Nec sopor illud erat,*) *sed coram agnoscere vultus,*
Velatasque comas, præsentiaque ora videbar:
Tum gelidus toto manabat corpore sudor:
Corripio è stratis corpus, &c.

Æn. iii. v. 172.

But Homer, as usual, has probably given the original hint; who, in the second Iliad, describes Agamemnon, after waking from sleep, as still imagining that he hears the divine voice that had warned him in his dream. Our Shake-

speare, without any intention, it may be presumed, of imitating either of these poets, has hit upon the same idea :

..... And so, with shrieks,
She melted into air. Affrighted much
I did in time collect myself, and thought
This was sooth, and no slumber.

Winter's Tale.

Ver. 33. *What foreign form was that ? how she inspir'd
My soul with love, and all my bosom fir'd !
The other, with what kind maternal air
She sought my love, and bade me follow her !*

This passage in the original, if literally understood, would apply wholly to the stranger, or *foreign form* ; that is, to Europe. But it is evident that the *kind maternal air* can only apply to Asia, who in the relation of the dream (ver. 15.) is said to claim Europa *as her daughter*. The stranger did not address her *with kindness*, or claim her *as a daughter*, but seized her *by main force* ; though this violent mode of courtship seems to have been more pleasing to the young lady than the gentle entreaties of her maternal suitor. Mr. Wakefield proposes altering *αυτη, she*, to *αλλη, the other* ; and consequently applying the latter part of this passage to Asia. This alteration I have ventured to adopt ; as, although unsupported by any authority, it is the only reading that will give sense to the passage. The reader need not be informed that this dream is a figurative representation of the fate of Europa, as related in the sequel.

Ver. 63. *Express'd in gold appear'd th' Inachian maid, &c.*

The basket of Europa is prophetic as well as her dream ; and the story of Io seems chosen as its decoration, from its resembling in so many respects her own. In Mr. Fawkes's translation, the engraving on the basket is represented as exhibiting circumstances occurring at two different points of time. Io appears both in the shape of a heifer, swimming through the sea, and in her proper shape of a woman, after arriving in Egypt. And Argus is represented both as alive, sitting on the beach and watching the course of Io ; and as afterwards slain by Mercury, and transformed into a peacock. No such absurdity, however, or violation of unity, appears in the original. Io is represented in the shape of a heifer, but is said (historically) to have resumed her proper shape after arriving in Egypt ; and there is no mention of the *living* Argus, but of his dead body lying at the feet of Mercury, and the peacock rising from his blood. The story of Io will be found in Ovid, *Met.* B. i. Fab. 13.

Ver. 87. *When now arriv'd within the verdant meads,
Dispers'd they seek, each as her fancy leads,
Some favourite flower ; &c.*

This beautiful description of Europa and her companions gathering flowers has been imitated and applied to the story of Proserpine, both by Ovid and Claudian :

..... dum Proserpina luco
Ludit, et aut violas, aut candida lilia carpit ;

Dumque puellari studio calathosque sinumque
Implet, et æquales certat superare legendo ;
Pene simul visa est, dilecta que, rapta que Diti.

Ovid. *Met.* B. v. Fab. 6.

Claudian's imitation is more diffuse :

Huc elapsa cohors gaudent per florea rura.
Prætorum spoliatur honos : hæc lilia fuscis
Intexit violis : hanc mollis amaracus ornat,
Hæc graditur stellata rosis : hæc alba ligustris.
Te quoque, flebilibus mœrens, Hyacinthe, figuris,
Nacissumque metunt, nunc inclita germ. na veris,
Præstantes olim pueros.
Æstuat ante aliàs avido fervore legendi
Frugiferæ spes una Deæ ; nunc vimine texta
Ridentes calathos spoliis agrestibus implet :
Nunc sociat flores, seseque ignara coronat :
Augurium fatale tori !

De Rap. Proserpinæ, Lib. ii. v. 118.

There is something wonderfully pleasing in the picture here exhibited by our poet. The beauty of the fair florists ; the employment itself, so expressive of innocence, health and gaiety ; the charming scenery around, the fragrance of the meadows, and the rich profusion and variety of tints which the flowers display, form together a most agreeable assemblage of objects. The similitude naturally strikes us betwixt the flowers themselves and the nymphs who gather them ; betwixt the bloom of female and of vegetable beauty ; both so charming and both so evanescent ; that analogy, in short, which Milton has so finely touched in his allusion to this fable :

..... that fair field
 Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
 Was gather'd. *Par. Lost*, iv..268.

Ver. 102. *Not long, sweet maid, didst thou these pleasures
 own;*

*Not long untainted wear thy virgin zone !
 Great Jove the influence of thy charms confess'd ;
 Soon as he saw thee, &c.*

It is to these and the following lines that the imitations of Ovid and Horace chiefly refer. I shall therefore insert these elegant imitations at full length, instead of citing the particular passages as they occur. The learned reader will be at no loss to trace the particular points of resemblance ; and, by comparing them together, will see in what different manner these two poets have, with equal felicity, imitated the same original.

..... Scepri gravitate relictæ,
 Ille pater rectorque Deûm, cui dextra trisulcis
 Ignibus armata est, qui nutu concutit orbem,
 Induitur tauri faciem ; mistusque juvencis
 Mugit, et in teneris formosus obambulat herbis.
 Quippe color nivis est ; quam nec vestigia duri
 Calcavère pedis, nec solvit Aquaticus Auster.
 Colla toris extant ; armis palearia pendent :
 Cornua parva quidem ; sed quæ contendere possis
 Facta manu, purâque magis perlucida gemmâ.
 Nullæ in fronte minæ, nec formidabile lumen :

Pacem vultus habet. Miratur Agenore nata,
 Quod tam formosus, quod prælia nulla minetur.
 Sed quamvis mitem, metuit contingere primò.
 Mox adit ; et flores ad candida porrigit ora.
 Gaudet amans : et dum veniat sperata voluptas,
 Oscula dat manibus : vix, ah ! vix cætera differt.
 Et nunc alludit, viridique exsultat in herba :
 Nunc latus in fulvis niveum deponit arenis.
 Paulatimque metu demto, modo pectora præbet
 Virginea tractanda manu : modo cornua sertis
 Impedienda novis ; ausa est quoque regia virgo,
 Nescia quem premeret, tergo considerare tauri :
 Cum Deus a terra siccoque a littore, sensim
 Falsa pedum primis vestigia ponit in undis :
 Inde abit ulterius, medique per æquora ponti
 Fert prædam. Pavet hæc, littusque ablata relictum
 Respicit : et dextrâ cornum tenet ; alterâ dorso
 Imposita est : tremulæ sinuantur flamine vestes.
 Jamque Deus posita fallacis imagine tauri
 Se confessus erat ; Dictæaque rura tenebat.

Ovid. *Met.* B. ii. Fab. 14.

It must be admitted that Ovid has in some respects improved on his original. The gradual advances of Europa in her familiarity with the bull are certainly more naturally and more delicately described by him. The same may be said of the manner in which her divine lover insensibly familiarizes her with the sea, by gradually increasing his depth, and thus preventing her alarm. Had he at once showed his intention, there seems no difficulty in Europa's

defeating it, by throwing herself off before he could reach the sea. The following two lines are a beautiful and picturesque embellishment :

Et nunc alludit viridique exultat in herba,
Nunc latus in fulvis niveum deponit arenis.

Horace's imitation is in the 27th Ode of his 3d Book ; where, in dissuading one of his female friends, whom he addresses under the name of Galatea, from undertaking a sea-voyage, he brings forward the example of Europa :

Sic et Europe niveum doloso
Credidit tauro latus, et scatentem
Belluis pontum, mediasque fraudes
Palluit audax.

Nuper in pratis studiosa florum, et
Debitæ Nymphis opifex coronæ,
Nocte sublustri, nihil astra præter
Vidit et undas.

Quæ simul centum tetigit potentem
Oppidis Creten ; Pater, O relictum
Filix nomen pietasque ! dixit
Victa furore.

Unde ? quo veni ? levis una mors est
Virginum culpæ. Vigilansne ploro
Turpe commissum ? an vitiis carentem
Ludit imago ?

Si quis infamem mihi nunc juvenum
Dedat iratæ, lacerare ferro, et
Frangere enitar modo multum amati
Cornua monstri, &c.

..... Aderat querenti
 Perfidum ridens Venus, et remisso
 Filius arcu.
 Mox ubi lusit satis ; Abstineto,
 Dixit, irarum, calidæque rixæ ;
 Cum tibi invisus laceranda reddet
 Cornua taurus.
 Uxor invicti Jovis esse nescis ?
 Mitto singultus, bene ferre magnam
 Disce fortunam ; tua sectus orbis
 Nomina ducet.

The soliloquy of Europa is much amplified by Horace, and becomes a speech of self-accusation and invective against her divine lover, carried to a degree bordering on comedy. It is altogether a masterly delineation of female passion. The speech of consolation is ingeniously put into the mouth of Venus ; who, with her son, is represented as laughing at the anger of the offended fair ; as if slyly insinuating that it was not sincere.

Ver. 117. *Sleek was his skin, its hue resembling gold,
 Save on his forehead ; there a circlet bright
 Full in the middle flam'd, of snowy white.*

Ovid has varied his description of the bull by making his colour white. Horace has copied it more closely in another place in describing a calf or steer :

Te decem tauri, totidemque vaccæ,
 Me tener solvet vitulus, relicta
 Matre, qui largis juvenescit herbis
 In mea vota :

Fronte curvatos imitatus ignes
Tertium lunæ referentis ortum
Qua notam duxit, niveus videri ;
Cætera fulvus.

B. iv. Ode 2.

Homer has a similar description of a horse, which is probably the original of both these passages :

..... Φρασσατο δ' ἵππον ἀριπρεπία προχόντα—κ.τ.λ.
Il. xxiii. v. 453.

..... And knew beside
 The leader horse, distinguish'd by his hue,
 Chesnut throughout, save that his *forehead* bore
 A splendid blazon *white, round as the moon.*

COWPER.

Ver. 161. *The sea-green Nereids, from the briny flood*
Emerging, round the God obsequious bend,
And, borne on whales, his wat'ry course attend.

The passage of Europa over the sea is described with much elegance and fancy. As a marine picture, indeed, I doubt if it has ever been surpassed. We need not except the great Homeric original, which seems to have served as the general prototype of all such descriptions ; the passage of Neptune over the sea in the 13th Iliad. Its beauties lying entirely on the side of grandeur and sublimity, no comparison can exist between them. Virgil has imitated this celebrated passage ; but, in adding to the simple majesty of Homer's Neptune a train of Sea-nymphs and Tritons, he seems to have had his eye on our poet :

Jungit equos auro genitor, spumantiaque addit
 Fræna feris, manibusque omnes effundit habenas :
 Ceruleo per summa levis volat æquora curru.
 Subsidunt undæ, tumidumque sub axe tonanti
 Sternitur æquor aquis : fugiunt vasto æquore nimbi.
 Tum variæ comitum facies : immania cete,
 Et senior Glauci chorus, Inoïsq̃ue Palæmon,
 Tritonesque citi, Phorcique exercitus omnis.
 Læva tenent Thetis, et Melite, Panopæaque virgo,
 Nisæe, Spioque, Thaliaque, Cymodoceque.

Æn. v. 817.

Yet this long catalogue of names, instead of embellishing, rather gives heaviness and languor to his description. Neptune appears with more dignity in Homer, with only the waves and the monsters of the deep to attend him, than he does here, in the midst of all this splendid and numerous retinue. For, by the sentiment which the poet bestows on the sea and the whales, in their consciousness of the presence of their God, he raises these mute and inanimate objects to a grandeur far beyond the parade of a procession.

Ver. 164. *The God himself, who rules the roaring seas,
 &c.*

Neptune, with his attendant Nereids and Tritons, receiving his brother with the respect due to a superior, and doing, as it were, the honours of his watery domain, is a finely-imagined circumstance. The Tritons sounding the Hymenæan on their shells, give the whole the air of a nup-

tial procession : thus adding animation and interest to what would otherwise appear but empty parade.

Ver. 175. *Her other hand adjusts her robe, and saves
From foul invasion of the dashing waves.*

The attitude of Europa is graceful ; and the circumstance of her collecting and adjusting her robe, which had been disordered by the wind and by the violence of her motion, is beautifully expressive of that innate sense of decorum, and of modesty, which could exert itself, as it were instinctively, in a situation of such danger, and where there were no spectators.

Ovid is so fond of this passage, that, beside what occurs in his fable of Europa above cited, he has introduced two elegant imitations of it in other parts of his works : one, where he describes the story of Europa as delineated in the web of Arachne :

Mœonis elusam designat imagine tauri
Europen : verum taurum, freta vera putares.
Ipsa videbatur terras spectare relictas,
Et comites clamare suas, tactumque vereri
Assilientis aquæ ; timidasque reducere plantas.
Met. B. VI. v. 105.

And the other from his *Fasti*, v. 605.

Præbuit, ut taurus, Tyriæ sua terga puellæ
Jupiter, et falsa cornua fronte tulit :
Illa jubam dextrâ, lævâ retinebat amictus ;
Et timor ipse novi causa decoris erat.

Aura sinus implet, flavos movet aura capillos :
 Sidoni, sic fueras accipienda Jovi :
 Sæpe puellares subduxit ab æquore plantas,
 Et metuit tactus assilientis aquæ.

Ver. 177. *Fill'd with the fresh'ning breeze, her ample veil
 Swells out, and bellies like a spreading sail.*

The blowing out of Europa's veil is a beautiful and picturesque circumstance ; and has been copied, if I mistake not, in graphic delineations of this scene.

Ver. 183. *Before her seas immeasurably spread,
 One vast expanse of sky above her head.*

Thus Virgil :

Postquam altum tenuere rates, nec jam amplius ullæ
 Apparent terræ, cælum undique et undique pontus.

Æn. iii. 192.

And Horace, as before cited,

Nocte sublustri nihil astra præter
 Vidit et undas.

Book iii. *Ode* 27. v. 31.

Ver. 198. *And find'et an oar in ev'ry limb.*

Copied by Seneca in a chorus of the Hippolitus, where this transformation of Jupiter is alluded to :

Ipsè, qui cælum, nebulasque ducit
 Fronte nunc torvâ petulans juvençus, &c.
 Ungula lentos imitante remos.

The first line he has borrowed from Ovid See Note on ver. 102.

Ver. 211. *Thus she; and thus the God was heard to speak.*

Claudian has followed our poet, both in the lamentation which he puts in the mouth of Proserpine, and the speech of consolation in which Pluto endeavours to allay her apprehensions and reconcile her to her fate.

Ver. 232. *And bore to Jove a long illustrious race.*

The children of Europa were, Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Sarpēdon. The two former were kings of Crete; and the latter is celebrated by Homer as one of the chiefs who fought on the side of Troy, and was slain there.

IDYL III.

It has been usual to compare this Idyllium with the first of Bion, and, from its superior powers of pathos, to give the preference to the latter. Such a preference is certainly due; but the superiority in this case is to be attributed more to the nature of the subject, than to the genius of the poet. The Elegy on Adonis is descriptive and dramatic. As relating a fabulous event, the poet had the wide field of fiction and of fancy lying before him, to use at pleasure. Moschus attempts at no description of the mournful event

which he deploras ; and, in lamenting a real circumstance, he was confined more strictly to the bounds of fact. The *Elegy on Bion*, therefore, from its very nature, admits not of that degree of pathos which we admire in that on *Adonis*. As a tribute of affection, however, to the memory of a beloved friend, as bewailing his untimely fate, and commemorating his extraordinary talents and virtues, it has done all that poetry can do, or that one poet could do, in lamenting another. The versification is uncommonly sweet and harmonious, and the verses have that melancholy flow which the subject itself so naturally inspires. The compliments paid to the genius and talents of the deceased are turned in a manner at once elegant and new, and the allusions to different passages of his writings introduced with much felicity.

Moschus has been accused in this *Idyllium* of a profusion of embellishment, and an aptness to run into the flowery regions of conceit. Without pretending entirely to justify him in this respect, I shall only remark, that if such ornaments are to be admitted at all in poetry, this seems their proper sphere. An elegy is not the effusion of violent grief. It is not until our grief has subsided into a calm and tender melancholy that we pour it out in this manner. In that frame of mind, the most minute recollections, the most trifling associations with the beloved object whom we lament, relieve and amuse the fancy. We form to ourselves a thousand visionary scenes, and fantastically combine them with the idea of a deceased friend or absent mistress. We look round on the external world, and imagine that every object in nature, animate and inanimate, sympathizes with

us, and participates in our affliction. This is all a false creation of the fancy, no doubt; but it is natural to a man in grief, and therefore a fit subject for elegy. The mind under the influence either of grief or joy naturally rises into the hyperbole. There is no greater absurdity in calling upon the rivers, fountains or flowers to join in our grief, than there is in invoking the mountains, the sea, and the sublimer objects of nature to rejoice with us: a figure so often and so successfully employed by the sacred writers.

We have two poems which agree with this so far, as being the lamentation of one poet on the death of another; Ovid's Elegy on the death of Tibullus, and Tickell's on the death of Addison. They are both elegant compositions, but have no further relation or analogy with this Idyllium.

Ver. 5. *Anemones, your liquid sorrows shed.*

The anemone is feigned to have sprung from the tears of Venus shed for the death of Adonis. See *Bion*, Id. i. v. 104.

Ver. 7. *Thou Hyacinth, sad plant! whose ev'ry leaf
Imprinted bears the characters of grief.*

The mention of the hyacinth here seems to have a further meaning than mere embellishment. From the first Fragment of *Bion*, it appears he had written an Idyl on the death of Hyacinthus; to which this is probably an allusion. From the proof he has given us in the *Adonis* how well he

was qualified to treat such a subject, we cannot but deeply regret the loss of this poem.

The hyacinth is feigned to have inscribed on its leaves the letters A I, expressing the Greek interjection *Αι*, *Alas!*

Ver. 11. *Sicilian Muse, begin the plaintive strain!*

The use of an *intercalary* line or *burden*, repeated at irregular intervals in the course of a poem, seems peculiar to the pastoral poets, and to have originated with Theocritus. Its effect is pleasing, particularly in poems of a grave or plaintive nature, where this repetition has a certain mournful solemnity not unlike the tolling of a bell. It likewise serves the purpose of dividing the poem into stanzas; thus affording an agreeable pause to the reader, and softening the abruptness of transitions from one subject to another, which it enables the poet to make with the greater facility.

Ver. 20. *Ye swans of Strymon, raise the mournful song!*
Sweet as the echoes which your banks return'd;
When your own bard in sweetest accents mourn'd;
Tell the Bistonian nymphs, th' Œagrian maids, &c.

That Orpheus is here meant, and not Bion, as generally understood, will I think scarcely admit of a doubt. Strymon, Bistonis and Œagrus are lakes or rivers in Thrace, where it does not appear that Bion ever sung, or ever was. There could, therefore, be no propriety in calling upon the swans of Strymon to imitate *his* strains, which they had never heard. But Orpheus *was* a Thracian, and might properly enough be supposed to have sung on the banks of those lakes.

From a hiatus, both in the sound and sense, between two verses of the original passage, it is conjectured by Valke-
naer that an intermediate one has been omitted, which prob-
ably fixed its application more distinctly to the Thracian
bard. Mr. Wakefield, following this idea, has added a line
of his own to supply the deficiency. This sense is further
confirmed by the appellation of the *Doric Orpheus* given to
Bion at the end of the stanza.

Mr. Fawkes has applied it neither to Orpheus nor to
Bion, but to the swans themselves :

“ As when your own sad elegy you sing,”

a sense which the text will hardly admit.

Ver. 50. *Not thus the Dolphin in the wat'ry main*

Ere mourn'd, &c.

Or her dear Ceyx Halcyone bewail :

Not thus did Cerylus his love deplore,

Or Memnon's birds along the rocky shore, &c.

The dolphin is said to utter a mournful cry, to be fond
of music, and to have a particular affection for poets. Of
this the story of Arion is an instance, who is said to have
been saved from shipwreck on the back of a dolphin. The
body of Hesiod, too, who was murdered and thrown into the
sea, is reported to have been brought on shore by dolphins,
and his murderers by that means detected and punished.
For the story of Ceyx and Halcyone, see Ovid *Met.* B. xi.
Fab. 10. ; and Memnon's Birds, *Met.* B. xiii. Fab. 6.

Cerylus, says Mr. Heskin, is the name given to the male
of the Halcedon, a sea-bird, supposed to be the same with

the Halcyon or King's-fisher; whose conjugal affection is so strong, that it is said never to survive the loss of it's mate.

Ver. 65. *Who now shall touch, O best-belov'd of swains,
Thy vocal reed, &c.*

There cannot be imagined a finer compliment than this to the genius and poetical talents of Bion; nor can admiration be expressed in a manner more lively and enthusiastic. The poet takes up the pipe of his deceased master; he looks at it with a degree of veneration, regarding it as something sacred, and not presuming to approach it to his lips; he feels it still warm with the breath of his master; he listens, and imagines he hears the notes which he had breathed into it still vibrating within the reeds. The great beauty of this elegant encomium is, that it is apparently undesigned, and merely the expression of the poet's own feelings. In it Moschus has displayed his own modesty no less than the talents of his master.

Ver. 70. *While Echo lurks within the hollow reeds,
Prolongs the dying sounds, and on the murmurs
feeds.*

I had rendered it thus before seeing any other translation, or any commentary on the passage. But I find that it is generally interpreted as if the reeds within which, or among which, Echo is said to *feed upon* the strains of Bion, were not the reeds which composed his pipe, but reeds in their natural state, growing by the side of a river, among

which she had taken up her abode. I am happy, however, to find myself supported in the sense I have given to this passage by the authority of Mr. Longepierre, who renders it in the same manner; and, as I presume the original word (*δορυκροί*) will equally admit of this mode of interpretation, I have retained it, as being certainly by far the more beautiful sense of the two. The extravagance of the figure is suited as well to the general manner of Moschus, as to that tone of hyperbole in which he speaks of this wonderful pipe.

Ver. 75. *Fair Galatea mourns her fav'rite swain.*

This is evidently an allusion to some poem of Bion's on the subject of Galatea, of which his fifth Fragment is probably a part. It seems to furnish likewise a decisive proof that Bion's residence was in Sicily (that being the favourite haunt of this celebrated nymph), and not in Italy, as asserted in some accounts of him.

Ver. 87. *And Cytherea's self laments thy doom;
Adonis' death yet in her mind she bears;
And that last kiss still living in thy verse.*

It is literally, "Venus loves thee *much better than* that kiss which she gave Adonis when dying." I wish there was any authority for such a slight alteration of the text as would make it, "She loves thee *for*, or *on account of*, that kiss." The meaning however is evident. It is a complimentary allusion to the Elegy on Adonis, and to that ad-

mired passage in Venus's speech, where the last kiss is described with such delicacy and warmth of feeling: He supposes the Goddess must regard with affection and gratitude a poet who has done such honour to her favourite, and given so lively and just a representation of herself.

Ver. 91. *Meles, to thee arise new scenes of woe!*

Meles was the name of the river on which, or near which, Smyrna was situated. This city, which was the birth-place of Bion, seems likewise to have the fairest claim to the honour of Homer's birth. Hence the epithet Melesigenes applied to that bard.

Ver. 92. *Thy Homer died, sweet bard! whose mouth divine
Calliope inspir'd, and all the Nine.*

Moschus calls Homer *την το Καλλιόπας γλυκερόν στομα*, *that sweet mouth of Calliope*: a highly poetic expression; which, however, will not admit of a literal translation. It seems taken from Theocritus, who has *Μοισᾶς καπνέον στομα*, "*flowing or eloquent mouth of the Muses*;" which expression likewise occurs in this same Idyllium.

Ver. 121. *Thy fate, O Bion! ev'ry bosom mourns
That with the Muses' sacred ardour burns:
Sicelidas, the pride of Samian swains, &c.*

The seven verses, of which the above and five following lines are a translation, are not in the old editions, but have

been added, as it is said, by Marcus Musurus, a Cretan, to supply a deficiency in the original text, and are supposed to be his own; though Scaliger contends that they are Moschus's: and asserts that the manuscript in which Musurus found them had been seen by Muretus at Rome. The internal evidence of the lines themselves is certainly rather against this supposition; being evidently taken from the 7th Idyl of Theocritus, who mentions these three poets, and whose very expressions are copied; *καπνρον στομα*, for instance, mentioned in the preceding note. It seems unlikely that Moschus would have been guilty of such a tautology as to use, within the compass of a few lines, expressions so similar as, *sweet mouth of Calliope* and *eloquent mouth of the Muses*. The lines themselves, however, are not unworthy of Moschus.

Ver. 137. *Alas! the various plants that deck the plain,
Tho' soon they fade, and shed their lovely flowers,
Yet Spring returns, and all their bloom restores.
But we, the great, the valiant and the wise,
Soon as relentless death hath clos'd our eyes,
Unheard, forgotten, in the dust consume,
And sleep for ever in the hollow tomb!*

It will not, I am sure, be displeasing to my learned readers if I insert the original of this celebrated passage:

*Αι αι ται μαλαχαι μιν εσαν κατα καπον ολωνται,
Η τα χλωρα σπλινω, το τ' ευθαλεις ουλον ανηθεν,
Τοτερον αυ ζωντι, και εις ετος αλλο φωντι*

Ἄμμις δ' οἱ μεγάλοι καὶ καρτεροὶ ἢ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες,
 Ὅπποτε πρῶτα θανώμεν, ἀνακοίῃ ἐν χθονὶ κοίλῃ
 Εὐδαιμὲς ἐν μάλα μακρὸν ἀτρεμόνῃ νηγείτον ὕπνον.

This beautiful reflection on death, so just in itself, and so applicable to the occasion on which it is introduced, is not the less to be admired for the elegant language and harmonious numbers in which it is expressed. The two first verses flow with a liquid softness which melts on the ear; and the concluding line *draws out its slow length* with a monotonous solemnity of cadence finely expressing the duration of that "eternal, *inexcitable* sleep" which it describes. Being the longest in number of syllables which hexameter verse will admit, like our Alexandrine, it strikes us with the idea of unusual length; and the five following dactyls of which it is composed are formed with a similarity of sound* as well as of measure well adapted to express a tedious unvaried sameness. Mr. Gray uses a similar monotony of cadence, with alliteration, to produce the same melancholy effect:

Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind.

And Terence's *tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum* expresses weariness and disgust by a similar artifice of sound.

But to return. A sentiment so obvious and beautiful as this could not fail of attracting imitators. None of

* The two first commence, and the two last end, with the same syllables.

Εὐδαιμὲς—ἐν μάλα—μακρόν—ατρεμόν—

these, however, has come so near it as a poet who wrote long before the time of Moschus ; the author of the book of Job.

“ For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease ; but man dieth, and wasteth away ; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ? He lieth down, and riseth not.”—Chap. xiv. ver. 2, 3.

Catullus seems to allude to this passage in the following lines ; particularly in the last :

Soles occidere et redire possunt ;
Nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux,
Nox est perpetua una dormienda.

Our Spenser has imitated it more closely :

Whence is it that the floweret of the field doth fade
And lieth buried long in winter's blade,
Yet soon as spring his mantle hath display'd,
It flow'reth fresh, as it should never fail ?
But thing on earth that is of most avail,
As virtue's branch and beauty's bud,
Reliven not for any good ?

Dr. Beattie, in his *Minstrel*, gives a brief abstract of this sentiment :

Shall man be left abandon'd in the dust,
When fate relenting bids the flower revive ?

and very happily applies it as an argument for the immortality of the soul. In this, however, he has perhaps ra-

ther copied from Pede Albinovanus, who has adopted this sentiment in his elegy on the death of Mæcenas :

Redditur arboribus florens revirentibus ætas,
Ergo non homini quod fuit ante redit ?

Ver. 148. *Could poison touch those lips unchang'd, nor feel
The sweetness there, and lose its pow'r to kill ?*

Moschus alludes to the general bitterness of poisons, in which he supposes their noxious powers to reside, and therefore wonders that on passing the lips of Bion this deadly draught did not lose its venomous quality, and become *neutralised*, as it were, by imbibing a portion of the sweetness residing there. In like manner he wonders that the wretch who prepared or administered the fatal potion, could escape the stronger enchantment of his strains. This double compliment is expressed with a brevity and elegant simplicity which sets it off to the greatest advantage.

IDYL IV.

This affectionate dialogue between the wife and mother of Hercules is supposed to take place during the absence of that hero on one of his labours. It expresses in a very natural and affecting manner, their anxiety for his safety and mutual consolation of each other under their respective misfortunes. These labours were enjoined him by Eurystheus, king of Argos, to whose power he was subjected by the will of Jove for twelve years. Megara was

the daughter of Creon, king of Thebes ; who gave her to Hercules in marriage as a reward for his having delivered the Thebans from the power of the Orchomenians.

Ver. 19. *Who with that bow by Phœbus' self bestow'd
His children slew.*

Hercules, by the malice of Juno, was afflicted with a fit of phrensy, during which he slew his children, supposing them to be those of Eurystheus. This catastrophe forms the subject of the Hercules Furens of Euripides.

Ver. 29. *And as the mother-bird, with piteous cries,
Bewails her infant brood before her eyes, &c.*

Virgil has a very beautiful simile which describes the same circumstance. But it is not necessary to suppose, with Mr. Heskin, that he has borrowed from our poet. Two descriptions of the same thing must of necessity be like, if they are both accurate.

Qualis populeâ mœrens Philomela sub umbrâ
Amissos queritur fœtus ; quos durus arator
Observans nido implumes detraxit : at illa
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
Integrat ; et mœstis latè loca quæstibus implet.

If there is any imitation in either case, we shall probably find the prototype in Homer :

Εὐθὶ σφαρὴν μέγα σημα' δράκων ἐπὶ πύττα δαφνοῖνος—κ.τ.λ.
Il. ii. 308.

.....'Twas then a sign
 Appear'd of dire portent. A serpent huge
 And terrible, his back with many a spot
 Suffused of sanguine hue, by Jove himself
 Thrust into light, crept from the altar's foot
 And glided tow'rd the tree. A sparrow there
 His callow young had nestled high upon
 The topmost branch, and under covert hid
 Of the thick foliage. Eight they were, and she,
 The mother-bird, made nine. The infant-brood
 Shrill shrieking first he crushed with cruel fangs.
 Meanwhile the wretched mother, hovering round,
 With piteous cries bewailed her young : at last
 Her screaming by the wing the monster seized, &c.

Ver. 37. *O would to Heav'n the same envenom'd dart
 That slew my babes, had pierc'd their mother's
 heart,
 Or, Dian, thou that aid'st a woman's throes
 Hadst with thy shafts reliev'd me of my woes !*

In the original it is, "*Would that I had perished with my children, pierced by the envenomed dart, O Diana, who rulest, or presidest, over women !*" This sounds rather awkwardly. Supposing Megara's wish to be, that she had been slain by Hercules along with her children, the apostrophe to Diana seems needless. But, if the *arrows of Diana* are what is meant, (which is a figurative expression for the *pains of child-birth*,) she must have perished, not *with* her children, but *before* she bore them. Mr. Wake-

field suggests the addition of a line before "*O Diana, &c.*" which he supposes to have been omitted, and which makes the passage stand thus, "Would that I had perished along with my children, pierced by the envenomed shafts (of Hercules), or that thou, O Diana, who presidest over women, hadst *before* transfixd me with thy arrows!" This addition I have ventured to adopt. It certainly both renders the sense more complete, and gives elegance and symmetry to the construction. Besides, *envenomed shafts* could not be applied to the arrows of Diana; but those of Hercules we know *were* poisoned, being dipped in the blood or gall of the Lernæan Hydra.—See Euripides, *Herc. Fur.* 421.

Ver. 45. *My parents now the peaceful grave contains.*

The old reading had, "My parents *till*, or *cultivate*, the Theban soil. But Creon, the father of Megara, was then dead, having been slain by Lycus before the time when this interview is supposed to take place. Mr. Wakefield, for *αγῶντες*, *tilling*, reads *αγαυτες*, *possessing*; and applies it to that possession which we have of the earth *as a grave*; in which sense he gives some instances of that word being used.

Ver. 47. *Whilst I within Tyrintha's walls immur'd, &c.*

Tyrintha, or Tyrinthus, was a city of Peloponnesus, within the district of Argolis, and then under the dominion of Eurystheus. It was here that Hercules usually resided,

when not employed in his labours or foreign expeditions ; hence the epithet *Tyrinthius heros* applied to him.

Ver. 62. *Ip̄icles thy ill-fated son.*

Ip̄icles was the twin-brother of Hercules, though the son of Amphitryon, as Hercules was of Jupiter.

Ver. 73. *Why, best of daughters, thus my grief renew ?*

It is thus Mr. Wakefield interprets δαιμονιη παιδων, which in all former editions had been rendered *prohibus infelix*, “unfortunate in thy children ;” as if alluding to the melancholy event just described, by which Megara became childless. The word δαιμονιος is taken both in a good and bad sense, signifies both *blessed* and *miserable*, and is used as a term of respect, as well as of contempt. We have likewise various instances of this, and other words of like meaning, used as superlatives ; as, Δαιμονιε ξεινων, *noblest of strangers* (Odys. xiv. 443.) Δια θεων, Δια γυναικων, &c. And in Latin, *Egregie juvenum, juste virum, &c.*

Ver. 90. *Yet ev'n in mirth there is satiety.*

And, *a fortiori*, much more so in grief. The pleasantest things may be carried to excess ; much more so those that are painful and distressing. Such is Mr. Wakefield's mode of explaining the expression, και ευφροσυνης κορος εστι, which has puzzled former commentators. He cites a passage from Homer to which it seems an allusion :

Παντων μιν κορος εστι, και υτνου και φιλοτητος, κ. τ. λ.

Il. xiii. 636.

The best of things beyond their measure cloy ;
 Sleep's balmy blessing, love's endearing joy,
 The feast, the dance, &c. POPE.

Ver. 97. *Not hadst thou been the fruit of my own womb.*

Alcmena here mentions three circumstances which form the strongest possible ties of affection. "I could not have loved thee more," says she, "hadst thou been my *own* daughter, my *only child*, and *unmarried*;" that is, *living in the house with me*, solely dependent on me for protection ; and solely administering to my comfort.

Ver. 105. *So dear a son can I enough deplore ?*

*Whom ten long months within my womb I bore ;
 Whose birth, ere yet he drew the vital breath,
 Brought me, his mother, to the gates of death.*

The labour of Alcmena was protracted, and her pains rendered to the last degree excruciating, through the jealous malignity of Juno. When she had long suffered under them, she was at last relieved by the artifice of Galanthis, her female servant. See Ovid, *Met. B. viii. Fab. 5.*

Ver. 129. *When suddenly from the deep trench burst forth
 Devouring flames, and pour'd along the earth.*

This dream seems intended as prophetic of the death which Hercules died ; by throwing himself into a burning pile on Mount Oeta while suffering under the excruciating tortures produced by the envenomed shirt of Nessus.

IDYL VI.

There cannot be a better translation of this lively little piece than the following ballad, which preserves all the humour and spirit of the original.

LOVE AT CROSS-PURPOSES.

Tom loves Mary passing well,
But Mary she loves Harry;
While Harry sighs for bonny Bell,
And finds his love miscarry.

For bonny Bell for Thomas burns,
While Thomas slights her passion;
So very freakish are the turns
Of human inclination.

As much as Mary Thomas grieves,
Proud Hal despises Mary,
And all the flouts that Bell receives
From Tom, she vents on Harry.

Thus all by turns are woo'd and woo,
No turtles can be truer;
Each loves the object they pursue,
But hates the kind pursuer.

Moll gave Hal a wreath of flowers,
Which he, in amorous folly,
Consign'd to Bell, and in few hours
It came again to Molly.

If one of all the four had frown'd,
 You ne'er saw people glummer ;
 But if one smiles, it catches round,
 And all are in good humour.

Then, lovers, hence this lesson learn,
 Throughout the British nation,
 How much 'tis every one's concern
 To smile a reformation :

And still through life this rule pursue,
 Whatever objects strike you,
 " Be kind to them that fancy you,
 That those you love may like you."

Some ludicrous consequences of this *chain of courtship* (as it may be called) are very ingeniously added here. The extremes of the circle too are made to meet ; which Moschus has not done : for Lyda is not *said* to love Pan, as Bell does Thomas, though as much seems to be implied.

· Horace has imitated this Idyllium (Book i. Ode 33.).

Insignem tenui fronte Lycorida
 Cyri torret amor :
 Cyrus in asperam declinat Pholoen, &c.

IDYL VII.

The river Alpheus, so often celebrated by the poets, has its source in Arcadia, and, after passing through Elis, falls into the sea at Pisa, a city near which the Olympic games were celebrated. This River-god is feigned to have fallen in love with the Nymph Arethusa, and to have pursued her until, exhausted with fatigue, she implored the assistance of Diana, who transformed her into a fountain. Alpheus immediately mingled his waters with hers, and Diana opened a secret passage for her through the earth into the sea, by which Arethusa poured her stream, still pursued by her lover; till, crossing the deep, she rose in Ortygia, an island in the bay of Syracuse, and which formed a part of that city. The river Alpheus likewise rose in the same place; and the communication was believed by the ancients to be still preserved; so that any thing thrown into the Alpheus in Elis, would rise again in the fountain Arethusa near Syracuse. For the story of Alpheus and Arethusa, see Ovid, *Met.* v. Fab. 10. It is thus alluded to by Virgil:

.....Alpheum fama est huc Elidis amnem
Occultas egisse vias subter mare: qui nunc
Ore, Arethusa, tuo Siculis confunditur undis.

Æn. iii. 694.

And again (*Eclogue* x. l.):

Extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem.
Sic tibi, quum fluctus subterlabêre Sicanos,
Doris amara suam non intermisceat undam.

Guarini has likewise a very pretty allusion to this fable in the Prologue to his *Pastor Fido*, where he introduces the river Alpheus thus speaking of himself :

Se per antica, e forse
 Da voi negletta e non creduta fama,
 Avete mai d' innamorato fiume
 Le meraviglie udite,
 Che per seguir l' onda fugace e schiva
 Dell' amata Aretusa,
 Corse (oh forza d' amor !) le più profonde
 Viscere della terra
 E del mar
 Quel son io.

Homer mentions a river in Thessaly which runs into the Peneus, and passes over it in like manner without mixing with its waters :

..... ἱμερτον Τίταρησιον

Ὅς ῥ' εἰς Πηνειὸν προΐει καλλιρροὸν ὕδωρ—κ. τ. λ.

Il. β. 750.

And fast by Titaresius' pleasant stream ;
 Who into Peneus his translucent wave
 Pours, not commixing, but, like oil, smooth glides
 Over the silver Peneus ; for from Styx
 Derived his waters flow, dread oath of Gods.

Achilles Tatius has given an elegant paraphrase of this Idyllium in prose. Nonnus has likewise imitated it, as he has many other passages of both our poets.

Ver. 5. *Sacred dust.*

Alluding to the dust of Pisa, where the Olympic games were celebrated. In like manner Horace :

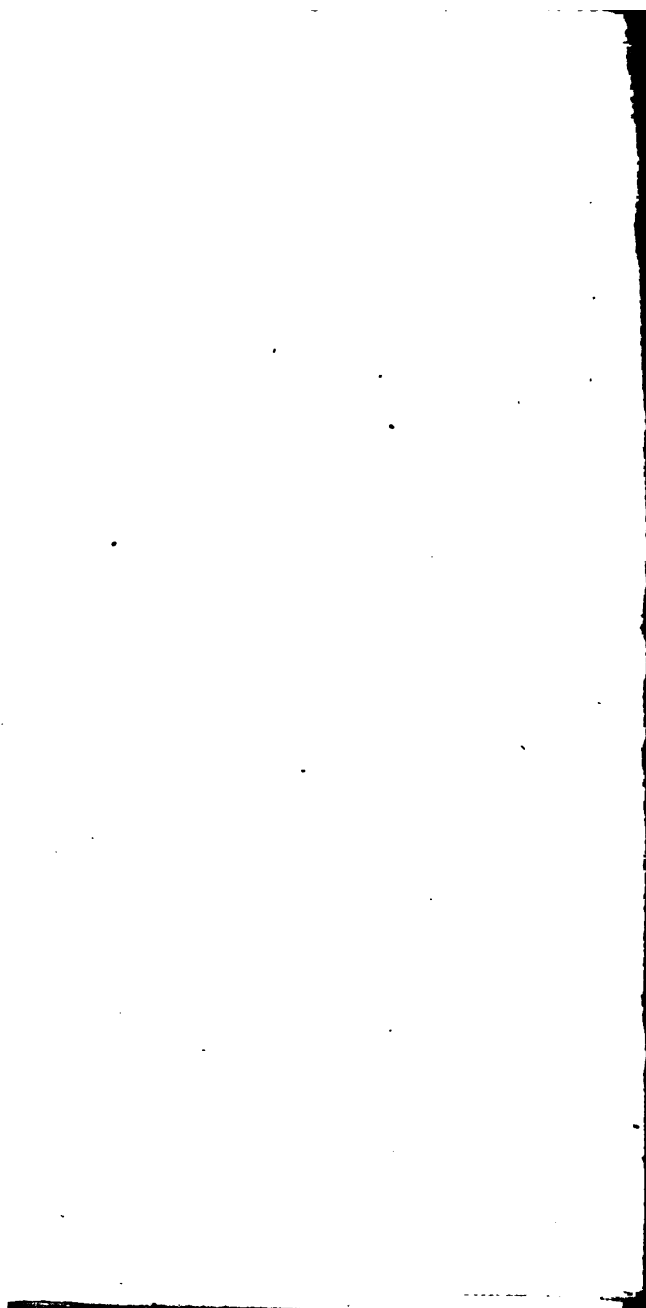
Sunt quos curriculo *pulverem Olympicum*

Collegisse juvat.

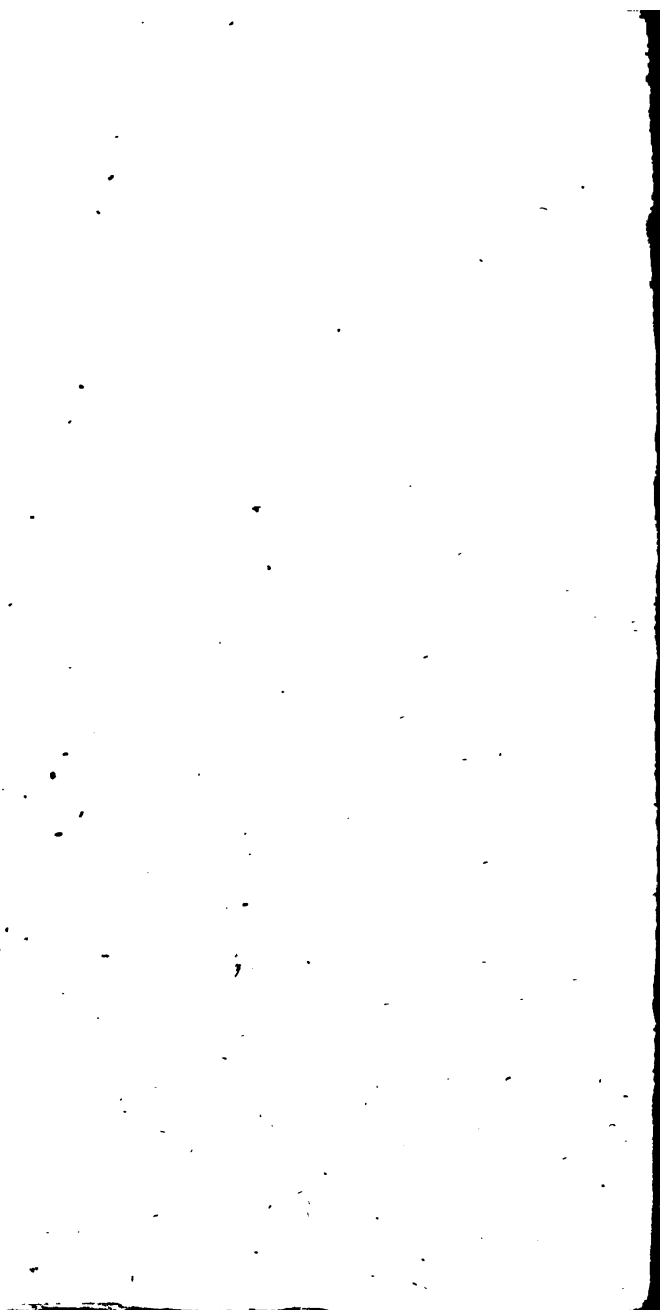
Book i. Ode 1.

EPIGRAM.

One would imagine that Moschus had written this lively little epigram as a sort of *palinodia* to his *Europa* ; intending to show that, however he has embellished and dignified this fable by the charms of his poetry, he was yet not insensible to its absurdity.



FABLE OF NARCISSUS;
RAPE OF PROSERPINE,
AND
PERVIGILIUM VENERIS.



THE
FABLE OF NARCISSUS,

FROM OVID MET. BOOK III. FAB. 7.

THUS her * he shunn'd, thus many nymphs beside
That range the hills, or through the waters glide,
And many a youth. Stung by his coy disdain,
Thus pray'd in anguish a rejected swain :
“ So may he love, nor be his love possess'd ! ” 5
He said : Rhamnus[†] grants his just request.
Deep in a wood unpierc'd by solar beam,
A lucid fountain shone with silver stream ;
Grassy its borders by the moisture fed ;
Untouch'd its waters in their peaceful bed 10
By swain or flock, or wand'ring beast or bird ;
Not ev'n a falling branch the placid surface stirr'd.
One day with hunting tir'd and spent with heat,
It chanc'd the youth to find this cool retreat.

* Echo.

† Nemesis, the Goddess of Revenge ; so called from Rhamnus, a village of Attica, where she had a temple.

The place invited : downward as he bows 15
To quench his thirst, another thirst arose.
For, as he drinks, the crystal flood displays
A lovely image to his ravish'd gaze.
He loves ; and, fill'd with unsubstantial fires,
An empty incorporeal shade desires. 20
Lost in self-wonder o'er the glassy flood,
Like Parian statue, motionless he stood.
His sparkling eyes two shining stars appear,
Locks which Apollo might, or Bacchus, wear ;
His lovely brow, his neck like iv'ry bright, 25
His cheek where roses mix with snowy white,
His mouth divine ; and all those charms that won
So many hearts, now captivate his own.
Himself he loves, and burns with flames self-caught,
Admir'd admires, and, whilst he seeks, is sought. 30
How oft th' illusive wave he vainly kiss'd !
How oft with disappointed grasp embrac'd !
Unknowing he beholds, beholding loves,
And vain deceit a real passion moves.
Ah why, fond youth, with fruitless love pursue * 35
A flying shade that lives but to the view ?
That which thou seek'st is no where to be found,
And that lov'd image dies, if you look round.
That fleeting shadow which the flood reflects,
From thee alone its faint existence takes ; 40
With thee it came, with thee it stays, and will
Depart with thee, inseparable still.

Him nor desire of food, nor sweet repose
From the dear object for a moment draws,
But stretch'd upon the tender grass he lies,
Devouring with insatiable eyes
His own lov'd form, and, as he gazes, dies. } 45
Then thus the youth to all the woods around
Proclaim'd his grief, faint rising from the ground.

“Ye woods! was ever seen more hopeless love? 50
(For am'rous are your shades, and conscious ev'ry
grove,)

Ye who have liv'd so many ages, say,
Was ever wretch thus known to pine away?

I see and love; yet what I love and see
(So blind my love) cannot be caught by me. 55

But more I grieve so small the barrier is;
No lofty mountains, walls or spreading seas,

A little water only lies between:

Is love withheld by obstacles so mean?

Yet he himself desires my fond embrace; 60

For as I downward bend, he meets my face.

O come, whoe'er thou art, and ease my pain!

Where wouldst thou fly, to what more happy swain?

My form or age you cannot sure despise;

For me full many a nymph and shepherd sighs. 65

Some signs of favour that sweet face would show,

Those arms approach, and meet my arms below;

To all my smiles and nods you smile and nod,

And, when I weep, your tears disturb the flood.

That lovely mouth too moves ; yet though so near, 70
Its gentle accents come not to mine ear ;
'Tis I mysel ! O false, O vain desire !
I burn with flames, which I myself inspire !
What part, then, shall I take ? be woo'd or woo ?
Yet what can I demand, or wherefore sue ? 75
What is my own I languish to procure ;
With blessings curs'd, 'tis plenty makes me poor !
From out this body how I wish to stray !
(Strange wish in love, to wish our love away !)
And now, through powerful grief, my strength decays ;
I see the end of my too rapid days ; 81
In flow'r of youth I die, in prime of years,
Death comes a friend to ease me of my cares.
Die I that love, let this dear self survive ;
Now, now, die both, united as alive !" 85

Distracted thus the hapless lover mourn'd,
Then to the dear resemblance back return'd ;
Where, as he hung, his tears in streams that pour,
Ruffle the fountain, what it shows obscure.
The fleeting shadow seeming to depart, 90
"Fly not," he said, "ah, cruel ! nor desert
Who thee adores ; him though hard Fate denies
To touch thee ; yet, O deign to bless his eyes !
Still feed the flame thou canst not quench." He said ;
And furious tore the garments from his head, 95
Then struck with snowy arms his naked breast ;
The blow a slender ruby tint impress'd.

So faint a red the varied apple dies,
And with the purer white alternate vies :
So glows the rip'ning grape in purple streaks, 100
The blush just rising on its glossy cheeks.
His injur'd beauty in the fountain bright
He saw, nor long endur'd the cruel sight.
But, as the wax with gentle heat decays,
Or melts the hour before Sol's early rays; 105
Dissolves the youth with love's consuming flame,
A hidden fire that eats into his frame.
No more the red with snowy white combin'd,
No more the vigour in his eyes that shin'd;
No more his strength, no more his form remain; 110
Lov'd by himself, by Echo lov'd, in vain.
Through mem'ry of her woe with anger fill'd,
She yet with grief the cruel scene beheld;
And as "Alas!" the wretched mourner sigh'd,
As oft "Alas!" the pining nymph replied; 115
As in despair his tender arms no beats,
Resounding Echo each sad stroke repeats.
O'er the lov'd image to the last he hung,
And these plaint accents died upon his tongue :
"Ah, youth, in vain belov'd!" Like feeble sounds 120
Echo responsive from the woods resounds.
"Farewell!" he said: "Farewell!" fond Echo cried;
On the soft grass he sunk his head—and died.
His closing eyes still drink the pleasing view,
And death alone the fatal sight withdrew. 125

His ghost, amid th' infernal shades retir'd,
Still in the Stygian flood its form admir'd.
The sister Naiads from their wat'ry seats,
And Dryads mourn : Echo the moan repeats.

The pile, the torches and the bier prepar'd, 130
(The last sad rites,) no body there appear'd :
But in its place a lovely flower they found,
Crowned with gold, and snowy leaves around.

NOTES.

THE story of Narcissus is not found related, or even alluded to, by any author prior to Ovid ; and has therefore most probably been invented by that poet, or embellished from some traditionary tale. It is unconnected with any historical fact, or any part of ancient mythology ; and may be regarded more in the light of a satire on personal vanity, and that inordinate self-love which absorbs every other passion, than either as a real or fictitious narrative. Considering this as its chief object, we may the easier dispense with the pathetic, and admit that superfluity of pretty ornaments and ingenious conceits which, in a real and natural description, would appear out of place ; but here agreeably amuse the reader's fancy, without withdrawing it from any thing that deeply interests him. The whole story indeed is of that extravagant kind, that we never look for nature in any part of it. We endure, and are even entertained by, the witticisms of Narcissus on his own singular situation, without ever reflecting that they are out of character in a dying man ; and admire the ingenuity of the poet, while we forget the absurdity of his fable. There are not wanting, however, in the Narcissus, some strokes of genuine pathos ; could we suppose the object of his passion to be any thing real.

Besides Ovid, Pausanias the historian, who wrote nearly two centuries after him, mentions the story of Narcissus, but relates it in a different manner. Narcissus, he says, was a beautiful youth of Thespiis in Bœotia, who, having lost a twin sister whom he tenderly loved, and who had been his constant companion in hunting, was accustomed to frequent, after her death, those scenes where he had enjoyed her society, and solace himself by looking at his own image in a fountain; which, from its strong resemblance, recalled the idea of his beloved sister: and that, in thus indulging his grief, he gradually pined away and died. This story is more interesting than Ovid's, and more honourable to the character of Narcissus; but is nearly as improbable, and, in all likelihood, equally fabulous.

Ver. 39. *That fleeting shadow which the flood reflects
From thee alone its faint existence takes;
With thee it came, with thee it stays, and will
Depart with thee*

This passage is imitated by Milton, and applied to Eve viewing her image reflected from the surface of a lake:

What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
With thee it came and goes, &c.

Paradise Lost, iv. 468.

THE RAPE OF PROSERPINE,

FROM OVID MET., BOOK V. FAB. 6 AND 7.

CERES first taught to cleave the dusty soil,
First gave kind fruits and Autumn's joyful toil;
The food of earth and laws repressing wrong
Are Ceres' gifts; of Ceres is my song.
Well, Goddess, does thy worth such honour claim; 5
May but my song be worthy as its theme!

O'er the vast limbs and wide extended corse*
Of huge Typhœus, by almighty force
Impos'd, Trinacria† lies, with cumbrous load
O'erwhelming him who scal'd the heav'nly road. 10
Oft struggles he his monstrous bulk to raise;
O'er each broad land a promontory's base
Is spread, Pelorus pressing on his right*,
His left encumber'd with Pachynus' weight;
While Lilybæum o'er his feet is laid, 15
And lofty Etna thunders o'er his head.

† Sicily, so called from its triangular form.

Hence clouds of dust the furious giant throws,
 And rolling flames from his wide nostrils blows :
 Oft lab'ring hard his members to release,
 He strives the mighty burden to displace, 20
 And towns and mountains from his breast to shake ;
 Then trembles earth, and all her caverns quake * :
 Ev'n Pluto then fears for his dark domains,
 Lest earth should ope, and on the dreary plains
 Through the wide chink let in a beam of day, 25
 And scare the pallid ghosts with fearful ray.

With such alarms possest, th' infernal God
 Yok'd his black steeds, and left his dire abode ;
 His course surrounding the Sicilian shores,
 With strict survey the doubtful land explores ; 30
 Whose firm foundations ev'ry fear remove.

Him thus employ'd the beauteous Queen of love
 Spied as she sat on sacred Eryx' side,

And, seeing, to the winged boy thus cried :
 " Beloved son," (and gave a fond embrace) 35

" In whom my strength and all my hopes I place,

Thy all-subduing darts now, Cupid, take,

And for the God a flying shaft direct :

That God, whose slender fortune could obtain *

The meanest portion of the triple reign. 40

The bright celestials own thy mighty sway,

Ev'n Jove himself, whom all the Gods obey ;

The powers of Ocean too have felt thy chains,

And he who o'er the pow'rs of Ocean reigns.

Shall Hell alone be free ? and doubts my son 45

Yet to extend my empire and his own ?

Is the world's third so mean a conquest priz'd ?

Yet ev'n in Heav'n our deity's despis'd,

And my authority and thine decays :

Too mild we are to suffer such disgrace. 50

Pallas and hunting Dian, see, defy

Our pow'r, and Ceres' daughter too would try,

Such patterns envious to emulate,

Eternal to preserve her virgin state.

But to thy mother be such favour shown ; 55

Make her the partner of her uncle's throne."

She said : his quiver straight the God unbound,

And, searching, soon a fatal arrow found.

Among a thousand none he valu'd more ;

The sharpest point of all his deadly store : 60

None could or deeper pierce or surer go ;

None more obedient to th' impelling bow.

His bow first bending 'gainst his knee with art,

He fix'd a barbed shaft in Pluto's heart.

Near Enna's walls diffusing its clear stream 65

Stands a broad lake ; Pergusa is its name.

Not fam'd Cäyster hears so oft the song

Of vocal swans his gliding waves among.

A skreen of lofty trees, with strict embrace,

Winds round the waters, and protects the place ; 70

From burning Phœbus an eternal shade ;

The leaves drop coolness ; various flow'rs bespread

The dewy earth with thousand lovely hues,
And round an everlasting spring diffuse.
Fair Proserpine, while careless here and gay, 75
Sportive she strays, intent on youthful play;
Now the pale lily, now the violet pulls,
Now decks her bosom, now her basket fills,
Each fond companion eager to excell,
Was first discover'd by the Pow'r of Hell; 80
Nor sooner seen than lov'd, nor lov'd than seiz'd:
So urges love, and such is am'rous haste.
With shrieks of terror the wide air she rends,
Now calls her mother, now her pitying friends:
As in the strife her slender vest she tore, 85
From her loose garments fell the flow'ry store.
Such the simplicity of child'sh years*;
Ev'n this slight loss could move her virgin tears.
His dusky car the victor drives with speed,
And urges on by name each foaming steed; 90
Around their arched necks and flowing manes
Rattling aloft the steely-colour'd reins.
Through the Palician lake and smoking pool*
Of black sulphureous vapours ever full
Which the cleft earth supplies, they take their way; 95
Now where a race from Corinth holds the sway*;
(From Corinth, that beholds a double sea,
They came, immortal Bacchus' progeny;)
Between two spacious ports the town is plac'd;
By Bacchus' race the lofty walls were rais'd. 100

Here Cyane and Arethusa wind
Their lucid waves, by narrow banks confin'd.
Within her fountain Cyane was seen,
Her waste just rising o'er its surface green.
Pride of Sicilian nymphs, soon as she spied 105
The Goddess, thus in wrath aloud she cried :
" Stop, ravisher ; immortal Ceres' son *
Thou canst not be, till her consent be won.
By fair entreaty, not by force, prevail ;
Oft will entreaty move where force may fail. 110
If thus I may compare, Anap's lov'd
And gain'd me, but by pray'rs, not terror mov'd."

Thus saying, wide she stretch'd her arms abroad,
Attempting to oppose the angry God.
His furious steeds impelling, high he whirl'd 115
His regal sceptre, and then headlong hurl'd
With potent arm into the liquid flood :
Earth felt the mighty blow, and op'ning show'd
An entrance to the realms of endless night ;
They plunge into the gloom and leave the light. 120

But Cyane, oppress'd with inward grief, -
In secret anguish pin'd, nor found relief.
The injur'd Goddess, her polluted waves,
Each cause by turns her mind of peace bereaves.
Dissolv'd in tears the hapless nymph consumes, 125
And of those waves she own'd a part becomes.
And now, behold, her body softer grows,
Flexile her bones, her nails their hardness lose.

Those parts of looser substance first decay,⁴
Her sea-green hair, her fingers melt away ; 130
Her slender limbs and hands, whose distant seat
Is first abandon'd by the nat'ral heat ;
Next, those more central, near the genial heart
Dispos'd, in thin pellucid streams depart.
Last, from the tainted veins a wat'ry flood 135
Glides downwards, now no longer living blood.
What *was* its pow'r th' augmented fount contains,
And nought of prensile substance now remains.

NOTES.

THE Rape of Proserpine has likewise been related by Claudian in a poem of considerable length ; and both he and Ovid have borrowed from the Europa of Moschus, as we have had occasion to remark in the notes to that Idyl. Ceres and Proserpine seem originally to have been Sicilian Deities, and their worship in Greece to have been derived from that island. The residence of Ceres is represented to have been in that delightful region near Enna, which has always been described by poets as a sort of terrestrial paradise.

Ver. 7. *O'er the vast limbs and wide-extended corse
Of huge Typhæus.*

Typhæus was one of the giants, sons of Tartarus and Terra, who made war against Heaven and attempted to dethrone Jupiter. That God having overpowered him, confined him under Mount Etna, according to some, but Homer says, under the island of Arime or Inarime ; supposed to be that which is now called Ischia on the Neapolitan coast. Virgil calls this giant Enceladus :

Fama est, Enceladi semiustum fulmine corpus
 Urgeri mole hac, ingentemque insuper Ætnam
 Impositam ruptis flammam expirare cæminis ;
 Et fessum quoties mutet latus, intremere omnem
 Murmure Trinacriam, et cælum subtexere fumo.

Æn. iii. v. 578.

Claudian, in his Rape of Proserpine, has likewise introduced the giant Enceladus, and makes Pluto drive over his body ; while the giant writhes his serpents round his chariot-wheels, and tries to dislodge him.

Ver. 13. *Pelorus pressing on his right, &c.*

Pelorus, Pachynus and Lilybæum, are the three promontories which form the projecting points of the triangular island of Sicily.

Ver. 22. *Then trembles earth, and all her caverns quake ;
 Ev'n Pluto then fears for his dark domains, &c.*

Inde tremit tellus, et rex pavet ipse silentium,
 Ne pateat, latoque solum retegatur hiatu ;
 Immissusque dies trepidantes terreat umbras.

Imitated from Homer (*Il.* xx 60.) where he describes the combat of the Gods :

Εὐδὲσιεν ὃ ὑπερβῆεν ἀναξ ἄσπερον Αἰδωνεύς,
 Δαίτας δ' ἐκ θρόνου ὤλτο, καὶ ἰαχῇ μὴ οἱ ὑπερβῆ—κ. τ. λ.

Neither Mr. Pope's nor Mr. Cowper's translation will convey any thing like a just idea of the sublimity of this celebrated passage, which Longinus eulogizes in language scarcely inferior in poetic beauty to that of the original itself; language which, the author of *The Pursuits of Literature* says, *only Burke could re-produce in English*. Virgil's imitation, though it falls much short of the original, will better serve the purpose of a translation :

Non secus, ac si quâ penitus vi terra dehiscens
Infernas reseret sedes, et regna recludat
Pallida, dis invisâ ; superque immane barathrum
Cernatur, trepidentque immisso lumine Manes.

Æn. viii. 243.

Ver. 39. *That God whose slender fortune could obtain
The meanest portion of the triple reign.*

According to Homer, the sovereignty of the universe was divided by lot between the three brothers, sons of Saturn and Rhea, by which Jupiter obtained the heavens, Neptune the sea, and Pluto the infernal regions ; the earth being common to all the three.—See *Iliad* xv. 197.

Ver. 87. *Such the simplicity of childish years,
E'en this slight loss could move her virgin tears.*

The circumstance of Proserpine, in the midst of her terrors, and while threatened with so much more serious a loss, regretting that of the flowers she had been collecting,

which fell to the ground in the struggle of her carrying off, is prettily imagined, and, finely marks the innocence and youthful simplicity of that goddess. There is an analogy, which seems not merely accidental, between this little incident and that introduced by Moschus in his *Europa*; where that female, in a situation of equal danger, busies herself with the adjustment of her robe and preserving it from the aspersion of the sea-water. Both present beautiful traits of female character; the one as indicative of modesty and attention to personal decorum, as the other is of raw simplicity and girlish attachment to trifles; and both showing that habit of the mind which can overcome even the stronger sensation of personal danger. It is likely, I think, that Ovid has sketched from Moschus here; but he has varied the original idea with much taste and characteristic propriety of application to the subject which he delineates.

Ver. 93. Through the Palician lake and smoking pool, &c.

A sulphureous spring or lake in Sicily, where was a temple to the Palici, two tutelary deities of the place, who were worshipped by the natives.

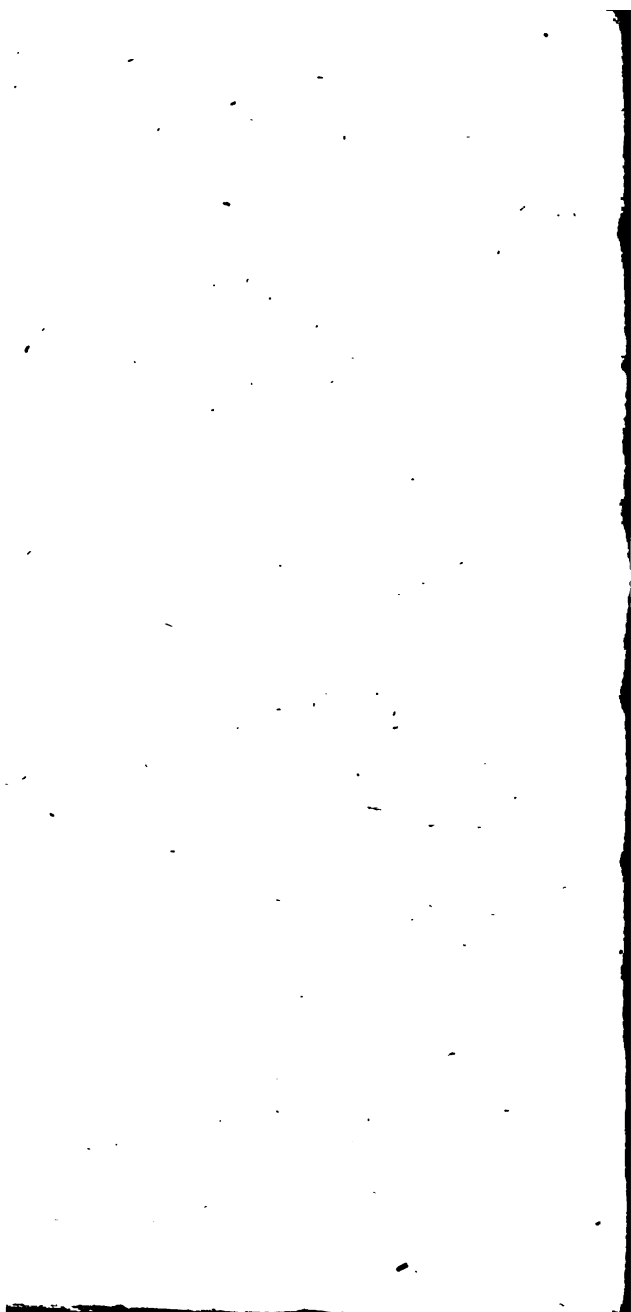
Ver. 96. Now where a race from Corinth holds the sway.

The city of Syracuse is here meant, which was founded by a Corinthian colony under Archias, one of the Heraclidæ, or descendants of Hercules. The island Ortygia formed a district of the town (perhaps the original town),

and there were two harbours upon the opposite sides of the island. In this respect it resembled its parent city, which is situated on a neck of land between the Saronic and the Crissean gulfs, on both of which it has a harbour ; commanding thus the entrance to the Egean sea on one side, and the Ionian on the other : hence the epithet *bimaris* applied to Corinth by the poets.

Ver. 107. *Stop, ravisher, &c.*

Claudian, in imitation of this passage, makes the goddess Minerva (whom with Diana he assigns as the companions of Proserpine) attack Pluto in a similar speech of invective, though much longer and more virulent. She upbraids her uncle in the most bitter terms of reproach, telling him " not to meddle with the Goddesses of this upper world, but to confine himself to his own murky regions, and *wed one of the Furies*, a much more suitable match for him."



THE
PERVIGILIUM VENERIS;
OR
VIGIL OF VENUS.

To-morrow Love in ev'ry breast shall reign ;
Who never lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love again.

Spring comes : the vocal spring to love invites ;
And Love's own season wakes the genial rites.

In spring the birds their tender nuptia's join, 5

To hail the spring their blithesome notes combine.

In spring the trees, as spring their bloom renews,

Unfold their tresses to the rip'ning dews.

To-morrow she who leads the laughing Loves

Rears her green bow'rs amid th' encircling groves ; 10

Where myrtle-boughs entwin'd their foliage spread,

And wreath'd with flow'rs diffuse a fragrant shade.

Venus herself shall grace her festal day ;

Venus preside, and all her pomp display.

To-morrow Love in ev'ry breast shall reign; 15
 Who never lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love
 again.

On this glad morn, from Ocean's foamy bed *
 From heavenly seed, of heavenly substance bred, }
 The new-born Goddess rais'd her lovely head ;
 While, as the beauteous vision rose to sight, 20
 The sea-green tribes beheld with new delight ;
 Around her sport the monsters of the main,
 And biped steeds attend the joyous train *.

To-morrow Love in ev'ry breast shall reign ; [again.
 Who never lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love
 'Tis she that paints with flow'rs the purple year, 26
 That nature bids her fairest aspect wear.
 When by Favonius' glowing breath impregn'd
 The trees shoot forth and swelling buds distend,
 She bids the flow'rs in op'ning clusters blow, 30
 And gives the foliage gracefully to flow.
 She with the dews that humid night distills
 Impearls the plants, and the young blossoms fills.
 Bent with the weight each fragrant head declines ;
 Pendent from each the glitt'ring dew-drop shines * :
 Glad the soft flow'r expands her silken leaves, 36
 And with a blush the am'rous dew receives.
 Blest moisture ! which by night the heavens dispense,
 To thy invigorating influence
 Unfolds her virgin charms the morning rose, 40
 By thee matur'd in varying lustre glows ;

Rivals the gem, reflects the ruby bright,
Aurora's blush, and Phœbus' purple light ;
By Venus' blood ting'd with celestial hue *,
From Love's sweet kiss her balmy breath she drew *.
To-morrow the coy bride her charms shall yield * ; 46
Charms which before the envious robe conceal'd
A husband claims, reserv'd for him alone,
And but a husband's hand shall cut the zone.

To-morrow love in ev'ry breast shall reign ; 50

Who never lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love again.

Her rites to share the beauteous queen of love

Invites the nymphs to range the myrtle grove.

Cupid she bids attend the festal train,

But bids unarm'd ; for arms her feast profane. 55

Ye nymphs, securely walk, securely stray ;

Love is unarm'd, he cannot hurt to-day.

Yet, naked as he is, of love beware,

So not too near him, nymphs ; for Love is fair ;

Tripp'd of his torch and bow, yet fear his charms ; 60

His beauty wounds ; tho' naked, Love's in arms.

To-morrow love in every breast shall reign ;

Who never lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love again.

He Goddess of the woods she next entreats.

Her virgin embassy the Goddess greets ; 65

Delia, one favour grant ; 'tis Venus sues :

Her yearly rites to-morrow she renews ;

One day remit the chase, and let the wood

Be free from slaughter and unstain'd by blood.

And if thy virgin purity sustain * 70
To witness our gay rites, thy presence deign.
Three nights you'll see around the sacred grove
Our festal choirs in varied measures move; [flow'rs,
Three nights, with garlands crown'd and deck'd with
Lead the brisk dance, and thrid the myrtle bow'rs. 75
Bacchus and Ceres shall the feast inspire,
And bright Apollo strike his golden lyre:
While all the wood resounds with mirth and song,
And joyous hymns the wakeful night prolong.
To-morrow, Delia, yield the woods to me; 80
One day let Venus reign instead of thee."
To-morrow love in ev'ry breast shall reign;
Who never lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love again.
Amidst Hyblæan flow'rs the Goddess rears
Her dread tribunal, and her throne prepares. 85
There Venus sits supreme, dispensing laws*,
And, with the Graces, judges ev'ry cause.
Hybla, pour forth thy sweets, thy treasures pour;
To grace the Queen of love let ev'ry flow'r
The year throws forth its gather'd fragrance bring, 90
And deck thy meads in all the pomp of spring;
With fresher bloom and fairer tints array'd
Than ever Enna's flow'ry field display'd.
To-morrow many a nymph shall tread thy plain,
Nymphs of the woods, the mountains and the main;
Each guest with smiles she welcomes to the grove, 96
And bids them, though unarm'd, beware of love.

To-morrow love in ev'ry breast shall reign ;
Who never lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love again.
To-morrow's dawn shall see the air and earth * 100
Their nuptials join, the source of many a birth.
When Ether shall descend in balmy show'rs,
And with soft shades refresh the drooping flow'rs ;
From vernal clouds call forth the rip'ning dew,
And bid th' expiring year its bloom renew : 105
Then in the bosom of his bounteous spouse *
Infus'd, his genial influence he throws
Through ev'ry part, and to each infant germ
Dispenses nourishment, and life, and form.
Unseen but felt, *her* mighty spirit glides *, 110
The veins, the mind itself pervading guides [sky
With hidden force ; through earth, through sea and
Diffusing her prolific energy :
In thousand forms her plastic power displays,
And gives the world to know creation's ways. 115
To-morrow love in every breast shall reign ;
Who never lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love again.
She o'er the deep her exil'd Trojans bore,
And brought her children to the Latian shore ;
To fair Lavinia join'd her warlike son, 120
And gave to rule the land his valour won.
At length the God of war with Rhea's charms *
She fir'd, and gave the priestess to his arms.
The happy nuptial rape she then supplied,
And bade each Roman grasp his Sabine bride. 125

Hence the Quirites, hence the Rami came * ;
Transmitted hence, through many a glorious name,
To latest ages ran th' illustrious line,
And down to Cæsar brought her race divine *.

To-morrow love in ev'ry breast shall reign ; 130

Who never lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love again
Inspir'd by her, fresh smiles the lap of earth,
And all the fruitful country teems with birth.
In rural shades fair Venus loves to dwell :
There Love himself was born, as poets tell ; 135
There cradled on the grassy turf he lay,
His eyes first op'ning to the light of day.
With conscious pleasure the fond mother smil'd,
And to her bosom press'd the lovely child.
Amidst a thousand blooming flow'rs he stray'd, 140
Inhal'd their sweets, and on their kisses fed.

To-morrow love in ev'ry breast shall reign ;

Who never lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love again.
And now, as vernal suns their heats infuse * ,
Each various tribe the nuptial rite renews. 145
See where the bull, amidst his lowing brides,
O'er the soft broom reclines his glossy sides.
Stretch'd in the shade the fleecy flocks repose,
The teeming mothers with their ardent spouse.
Love bids the birds distend their tuneful throats, 150
And woo their feather'd mates in sprightly notes.
'Tis she inspires the swan's hoarse screaming voice * ,
While all the lake re-echoes to his cries.

Hark ! from the poplar Philomel complains *,
And warbles forth her sadly-pleasing strains. 155
As if she sung (so sweet the music flows)
Loves of her own, and not her sister's woes.
She sings, whilst *I* am mute. When, lovely Spring,
Shalt thou return, that I again may sing ?
For whilst I listen, Phœbus turns away, 160
Nor deigns to glad me with one cheering ray.
To silence charm'd, my vocal pow'rs I lose,
And all the inspiration of the Muse.
By silence thus th' Amyclæans were undone * ;
Thus, by one fatal silence, lost their town. 165
To-morrow love in ev'ry breast shall reign ;
Whoever lov'd shall love, who lov'd shall love again.

NOTES.

THIS elegant poem has been transmitted to us in a state so extremely imperfect that we can scarcely form a judgment of what it was as the author originally gave it. The text is in many parts corrupted, in some defective; and although the labours of several ingenious and learned men have been applied to correct the vitiated passages, they have seldom succeeded in restoring a sense anywise answerable to the elegance of what is entire.

The *Pervigilium Veneris* was first published from the original manuscript at Paris in the year 1577 by Pithou, or Pithœus, who added notes and amended the text. This edition was subsequently illustrated by the commentaries of Justus Lipsius, Weitzius and Douza. In 1637 it was republished at the Hague by Peter Scriverius, among a collection of amatory poems, from a better manuscript found by Salmasius, whose annotations and emendations were added, with those of Scriverius himself and others: and a most voluminous commentary on the poem appeared in 1644 by Andrew Rivinus, Professor of Humanity at Leipzig. The whole of these different commentaries, with the original and amended text of both editions, have been collected and published at the Hague in 1712. This publica-

tion, which has the "Cupido cruci affixus" of Ausonius annexed to it, presents a curious instance of prolix commentary. The whole part devoted to the *Pervigilium* consists of 166 octavo pages; of which the poem itself, if written continuously, would not occupy more than *three*! as it contains in all only 93 lines. The commentary of Rivinus alone takes up 123 pages. Amidst this immense mass of commentary, the little poem itself lies, (not illustrated, but) buried and overwhelmed, like a bantling overlaid by its nurses. In the corrupted passages I have availed myself of such of the emendations as appeared most congenial to the style and manner of the original; but the notes I found more apt to confuse than elucidate my ideas on the subject.

The author of this poem, and the era when it was written, are equally unknown to us. By some it has been attributed to Catullus, while others discover in it the elegant simplicity of the Augustan age. Other critics again, among whom are some of the present day, consider it the production of a later period than even the time of Ausonius, to whom it has likewise been ascribed. If I were to venture an opinion, I would say that there is a certain Oriental luxuriance, and at the same time a refined delicacy, about it, which savours neither of the style or age of Catullus, nor of the purity of the best Augustan writers; but nothing that marks it as belonging to so late an era as the decline of Roman literature. Dr. Parnell adds to the title of his translation, "written in the time of Julius Cæsar." The only authority for this that I see is the mention of Cæsar in the poem as the descendant of Venus (*nepotem Cæsarem*), and the supposition that this must necessarily be intended

as a compliment to a *living* prince. But it will equally apply to his nephew Augustus ; and I wonder it has not struck those who inquired into the era of this poem, as some proof of its being written about the time of that emperor. It could apply to none of his successors, as the Julian line terminated with Augustus. We know, besides, that it was a common compliment paid to this prince by the poets of that day, to trace his descent from Eneas.

The *Pervigilium Veneris* is written, as the title imports, to celebrate the *Vigil*, or *nightly festival*, held in honour of that Goddess. This festival took place in the month of April, and continued, as we find from the poem, for three nights. The poet, therefore, very properly commences with a description of the spring ; not only as being the time of the festival itself, but as the *season of love* ; when all the genial powers of nature revive, after having remained torpid during the winter. The object of the poem is two-fold : it describes, with much elegance and richness of fancy, the celebration of these rites by the Goddess in person, and it launches out, in the manner of a hymn, in the praises of that Deity, and a commemoration of her extensive powers and influence ; considering her, in the most enlarged sense, as the great source of generation and principle of fecundity, diffused over the whole universe ; which operates in renewing and continuing life, both in the animal and vegetable creation, and in producing all the great elementary changes in the material world. The poet has delineated, in a very beautiful and picturesque manner, the influence of the genial season, or rather of the Goddess herself, on the various tribes of beasts and birds, and even of the vegetable creation, to which he

likewise ascribes the sentiment of love. And, lastly, the Goddess is celebrated as the guardian and, through her son Eneas, the foundress of the Roman state; as having effected by her influence some of the most remarkable events in its early history, and transmitted her race, through the Alban kings and Romulus, down to Cæsar.

Ver. 17. *On this glad morn, from Ocean's foamy bed
From heavenly seed, of heavenly substance bred,
The new-born Goddess rais'd her lovely head, &c.*

This stanza is extremely defective. Several lines are evidently wanting, and the three that remain so corrupted that some of the words are not even Latin. Even in its corrected state, it exhibits but a glimmering of sense, from which we can only infer that it was intended as a description of the birth of Venus; a representation (probably a highly picturesque one) of the Venus *anadyomene*, or Venus arising from the sea. Dr. Parnell has given a very elegant translation, or rather paraphrase, not so much of the passage itself, as of what it may be supposed to have been.

'Twas on that day which saw the teeming flood
Swell round, impregnate with celestial blood;
Wand'ring in circles stood the finny crew,
The midst was left a void expanse of blue.
There parent Ocean work'd with heaving throes,
And dropping wet the fair Dione rose.

Any deficiency in this description the reader will find

amply supplied in Anacreon's elegant ode on this subject. See also Hesiod. Theogony, ver. 190 et seq.

Ver. 23. *And biped steeds attend the joyous train.*

The sea-horse (*hippocampus*) is described as having only the two fore-feet, his hinder parts terminating like a fish. The horses of Neptune are represented as being of this description.

Ver. 25. *'Tis she that paints with flow'rs the purple year, &c*

The whole of this stanza is obscure in the original. Of the thirteen lines of which it consists, eight have undergone alteration, as corrupted; some of them in various ways; yet, after all this correction, the meaning can only be guessed at. Its general intention, however, is evident; namely, a description of the progress of vegetation, which the poet has fancifully delineated under the figure of a nuptial union between the dew and the flowers. Throughout this poem the dew or rain is considered as the general husband of plants; and here the Rose is represented as the peculiar object of his devotion. This personification is carried to a whimsical degree, reminding us of the *extravaganzas* of the Persian poets, who celebrate the passion of the Nightingale for this beautiful flower. Dr. Darwin has gone still further; and in his *Botanic Garden* made *the Loves of the Plants* the subject of a whole poem; this, too, without calling in the aid of a foreign husband. With him every flower is a Narcissus, *enamoured of itself*.

Dr. Parnell has done ample justice to this stanza ; so far, at least, as making very pretty poetry of it. If his version is not what the author gave, it is certainly not unworthy of him.

Ver. 35. *Pendent from each the glitt'ring dew-drop shines,
&c.*

*Et micant lacrymæ trementes decidino pondere ;
Gutta præceps orbe parvo sustinet casus suos.*

This description of the dew-drop suspended from the extremity of the leaf, and in the act of falling, has all the minute accuracy of a Flemish painting. The picture itself has been wholly supplied by two emendations of Lipsius and Lernutius (the words in Italics), the passage in its original state being entirely unintelligible.

Dr. Parnell has very happily rendered it :

Bright trembling pearls depend at ev'ry spray,
And, kept from falling, seem to fall away.

Ver. 44. *By Venus' blood, ting'd with celestial hue.*

This whole passage is extremely obscure in the original. The expression *fusa*, or *facta de cruore*, applied to the Rose, is supposed an allusion to the origin of that flower, from the blood of Adon's (see Bion, Id. i. ver. 104.) ; or, according to other poets, from the blood of Venus herself, when, in flying to her wounded lover, she lacerated her feet among thorns. I have followed Dr. Parnell in adopting this latter idea.

Ver. 45. *From Love's sweet kiss her balmy breath she drew.*

"De amoris oculis," for *oculis* (the *kisses* instead of the *eyes* of Love), is a very happy emendation of Pithou, and may be explained by a passage in the sequel, where the infant Cupid is described as deriving his nourishment from *the kisses of flowers* (see verse 141). That the delicious perfume of the rose should originate from the breath of the God of love impressed on it by his kiss, is a pretty idea, and has every likelihood, I think, of being the original one. We find a curious coincidence with this idea in the words of a well known song, to which the music of Handel has added as much sweetness as the breath of Cupid could impart to the flavour of the flower itself:

What's sweeter than the new-blown rose?—

O sweeter far—the *breath of love.*

Ver. 46. *To-morrow the coy bride her charms shall yield, &c.*

This and the following lines are understood by Dr. Parnell as applied, in continuation of the allegory, to the nuptials of the dew and the rose. But I see no reason why it may not apply to *real* nuptials of men and women; since the influence of the genial season may be supposed to operate on man as well as on the inferior tribes.

Ver. 70. *And if thy virgin-purity sustain
To witness our gay rites, thy presence deign.*

Dr. Parnell renders it,

Venus, O Delia! if she could persuade,
Would ask thy presence, *might she ask a maid.*

This is certainly the literal English; but in the original an invitation seems *implied*, if not directly expressed, though qualified with a doubt of its being accepted. This is manifest from the expression in the following line, *jam videres*, "Three nights you'll see," &c To say that she could not ask *a maid*, would indeed convey a severe implication against the numerous assemblage of nymphs, who, we are told, *were* asked. The meaning seems to be, "Venus wishes you to attend her festival, if you *consider* it becoming a virgin; if it is consistent with your strict ideas of virgin purity." But what other females might do without any deviation from propriety, might not be so becoming in the Goddess of chastity. The Doctor has not rendered this stanza with his usual felicity. The message to Diana has more the air of a peremptory command than an entreaty. In the original, Venus requests of Diana the use of the woods (as considering them her proper domain) for the celebration of her festival; but, in the Doctor's translation, she seems rather to threaten a forcible expulsion:

Ye fields, ye forests, own Dione's reign;
And Delia, huntress Delia! shun the plain.

In the following couplet,

Here crowds in measures lightly-decent rove ;
And seek by pairs the covert of the grove,

the last line is entirely an addition. No such indelicate idea is suggested in the original ; nor is there any allusion to a meeting of the sexes in this festival of love. Such may be supposed ; but it is kept out of sight by the poet.

Ver 86. *There Venus sits sublime, dispensing laws,
And, with the Graces, judges ev'ry cause.*

*Venus prees dat jura,
Adsederunt Graiæ.*

Venus sits as *president* in this tribunal, or court of love, the Graces as *assessors* : such is the force of *adsederunt*.

Ver. 100. *To-morrow's dawn shall see the air and earth
Their nuptials join, &c.*

Besides some corruptions in the text, there is evidently a deficiency of one or more lines at the commencement of this stanza. According to what seem the best emendations, the three first lines stand thus :

*Et recentibus virentes ducat umbras floribus,
Cras erit qui primus æther copulavit nuptias,
Ut pater totum crearet vernis annum nubibus ;*

where the first line, commencing with the copulative *et*, is either misplaced, or must refer to something that went be-

fore and has been omitted. The substitution (by Salmasius) of *ex* for *et* does not complete the sentence; as there is still a nominative wanting to *ducat*. I have ventured a transposition of these lines, which gives sense to the passage, without the necessity of supposing any deficiency, by making the stanza commence with the second verse, and placing the first after the other two, in this manner :

Cras erit qui primus æther copulavit nuptias,
 Ut pater totum crearet vernis annum nubibus
 Et recentibus virentes ducat umbras floribus.

Pater is here applied to *Æther*, the Air. Thus Lucretius (book i.),

..... Pater Æther
 In gremium matris terræ præcipitavit, &c.

And Virgil (Geor. ii.),

..... Pater omnipotens fecundus imbribus Æther.

The nuptials of the Air and Earth, or of Jupiter and Juno, is a figure employed by the poets to represent that mutual attraction and influence of these elements, by which the atmosphere, descending in the form of rain, fertilizes the earth, and produces all the phenomena of vegetation.

Ver. 106. *Then in the bosom of his bounteous spouse
 Infus'd, his genial influence he throws
 Through ev'ry part, and to each instant germ
 Dispenses nourishment, and life, and form.*

In sinum maritus imber fluxit almæ conjugis
 Unde foetus mixtus omnes aleret magno corpore.

Virgil has expressed the same idea in words so similar, that there can scarce be a doubt that the one passage is taken from the other, whichever be the original :

Tum Pater omnipotens fœcundis imbribus Æther
 Conjugis in gremium lætæ descendit, et omnes
 Magnus alit magno commistus corpore fœtus.

Geor. ii. 325.

Ver. 110. *Unseen but felt, her mighty spirit glides
 The veins, the mind itself pervading guides, &c.*

Ipsa venas atque mentem permeante spiritu
 Intus occultis gubernat procreatrix viribus,
 Perque cœlum, perque terras, perque pontum subditum,
 Pervium sui tenorem seminali tramite
 Inbuit, jussitque mundum nosse nascendi vias.

The *ipsa* here (*her mighty spirit*) refers, not to *terra*, the earth, or the spouse of *Æther*, mentioned just before, but to Venus herself. The Goddess is here celebrated in the sublimest and most extensive of her functions ; as representing that great principle, diffused over the universe, which animates, moves and informs the whole mass ; and which maintains this system of things in its present order by a constant renovation and re-production of its particular parts. This principle, traced to its source, is in fact no other than *the Deity himself* ; who, in his relation to the material world, is typified under this figure ; as, according to the most rational idea of the heathen theology, their different Gods and Goddesses only represent different modifi-

cations of one Supreme Being, or different exertions of his power. This notion of a general diffusion of the Eternal Mind through the whole universe, communicating its divine essence and intellect to all animated beings, is still more beautifully illustrated by Virgil in his 6th Eneid :

Principio cœlum ac terras, camposque liquentes,
Lucentemque globum Lunnæ, Titaniaque astra,
Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.
Inde hominum pecudamque genus, vitæq. volantum, &c.
Igneus est ollis vigor et cœlestis origo.

Ver. 724.

And again, Georgic iv. ver. 221.

..... Deum namque ire per omnes
Terrasque tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum.
Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum,
Quemque sibi tenues nascentem arcessere vitas.

The origin of this doctrine, or at least its introduction into Greece, is attributed to Thales the Milesian, and to Pythagoras ; who are said to have brought it from Egypt, from whence they drew many of their philosophical dogmas.

It was afterwards adopted both by the Stoics and Platōnists ; though differently modified by these different sects. They both agreed, however, in calling God the *soul of the world* ; but the Stoics appear to have considered that God exists *in* the universe, or rather that the universe *is* God, and that all animated beings are parts of the Deity : while the Platōnists seem rather to assign to him a separate and extramundane existence, and to consider the world not as

co-existing *with*, but as created *by* him, and all intelligent beings as emanations of his divine intellect. From its Eastern origin, we need not be surprised at the coincidence of this doctrine with the scriptural notions of the Deity ; if, at least, that *ubiquity* so strongly insisted on there is to be understood in this sense. St. Paul, however, in instructing the Greeks, refers more directly to this tenet of their philosophy, when he preaches to them that God who is "all in all," "whose offspring we are," and "in whom we live, move, and have our being."

In considering the Goddess of love as the general *pro-creatrix*, or *producing cause* of all things, our poet seems to have followed a very ancient opinion concerning the creation, likewise found among the Egyptians and other Eastern nations. Eusebius, in his *Preparation of the Gospel*, has detailed the doctrine of the ancient Phœnician cosmōgōnists on this subject, as collected by Sanchōniāthon, a writer of that nation. "The theology of the Phœnicians," he says, "supposes the original of all things to be a dark *aërial Spirit* and a *turbid obscure chaos*, and that these were for a long time infinite and unbounded. But they say, when the spirit became *enamoured of its own principles*, and a mixture ensued, this tie (or junction) was called *Love* (ἔρως). This was the *origin of the creation of all things*." In the poems attributed to Orpheus and in the *Theogony* of Hesiod we find the same doctrine advanced respecting Love, who is there represented as the most ancient of deities, and as that power which, operating on that original substance which they term *chaos*, raised it from confusion into order and symmetry, and formed out of it this whole universe.

Ver. 122. *At length the God of war with Rhea's charms, &c.*

Rhea Sylvia, the mother of Romulus, otherwise called Ilia; the daughter of Numitor, king of Alba, who dedicated her to the service of the Goddess Vesta.

Ver. 126. *Hence the Quirites, hence the Rami came.*

Rami is here substituted (*euphoniae gratia*) for Rhames or Rhamnes, an appellation given to the equestrian order of Romans (being originally one of the three centuries into which that order was divided by Romulus), as Quirites was to the people at large, or Roman citizens in general. After their junction with the Sabines, the term Quirites, by which the latter were before distinguished, was applied to the united nation.

Ver. 129. *And down to Cæsar brought her race divine.*

Suetonius, in his Life of Julius Cæsar, introduces him giving this account of the origin of his family, in the funeral oration which he pronounced, when Quæstor, on his aunt Julia, the sister of his father. "My aunt, by her mother's side, was of royal descent; but, by her father, claimed as her ancestors the immortal Gods themselves. From Ancus Marcius proceeded the Marcian kings, of which name her mother was; and the Julian family derives its origin from Venus."

Ver. 144. *And now as vernal suns their heats infuse,
Each various tribe the nuptial rite renews.
See where the bull amidst his lowing brides, &c.*

The original text has suffered some corruption. The following is the amended reading which Dr. Parnell has adopted :

*Ecce super genistas tauri explicant latus,
Quisque tutus quo tenetur conjugali fœdere.*

I have, however, preferred the one suggested by Pithou, which, by a transposition of the two lines and further alteration of a word, makes them stand thus :

*Quique castus continetur conjugali fœdere.
Ecce, jam super genistas explicant tauri latus.*

By this sense, the formation of a nuptial union among the different tribes of animals is first stated as a general assertion, and the particular instances follow. Calpurnius has imitated, or rather copied, this last line :

*Cernis ut, ecce, pater quas tradidit, Ornite, vaccæ
Molle sub hirsutâ latus explicuere genestâ.*
Eclog. i.

Ver. 152. *'Tis she inspires the swan's hoarse screaming voice*

.... Loquaces ore rauco stagna cygni perstrepunt.

Rivinus insists here that these words are to be taken as expressing, not the natural harsh noisy cry of the swan, but that musical song which poets attribute to him ; and in

support of this brings forward an instance from Virgil, where Servius, in commenting upon this line,

Dant sonitum-rauci per stagna loquacia cygni,

says, that the word *rauci* is to be taken in a good sense. Dr. Parnell, too, has rather given in to this idea in his translation. Notwithstanding these authorities, however, I can see no reason, either in this case or the one from Virgil, for deviating from the natural and direct sense of the words. *Rauci*, *perstrepere* and *loquaces*, are all terms applied to the noisy cries of water-fowl, and which, particularly when combined, never could be intended to express a musical sound. Nor is there any thing gained in poetic beauty by such a supposition. The natural screaming cry of the swan has, it appears to me, more of picturesque beauty in this case, when combined with the objects here presented, than the most melodious strains ever bestowed on him by the poets.

Ver. 154. *Hark, from the poplar Philomel complains, &c.*

As if she sung (so sweet the music flows)

Loves of her own, and not her sister's woes.

The story of Philomela and her sister Progne is too well known to require being recited here. It will be found in Ovid, *Met.* vi. Fab. 7.

Ver. 164. *By silence thus th' Amycleans were undone;*

Thus, by one fatal silence, lost their town.

Amyclæ was a town of Campania in Italy. During a siege of the place, false alarms having been spread, that

the enemy were advancing to storm it, the Amyclæans enacted a law forbidding any such report to be published in future. The consequence was, that when the enemy *did* come, they were surprised, and their city taken. Hence the silence of the Amyclæans became proverbial. Virgil *x. 564* calls this city in his catalogue "*tacitis Amyclis*."

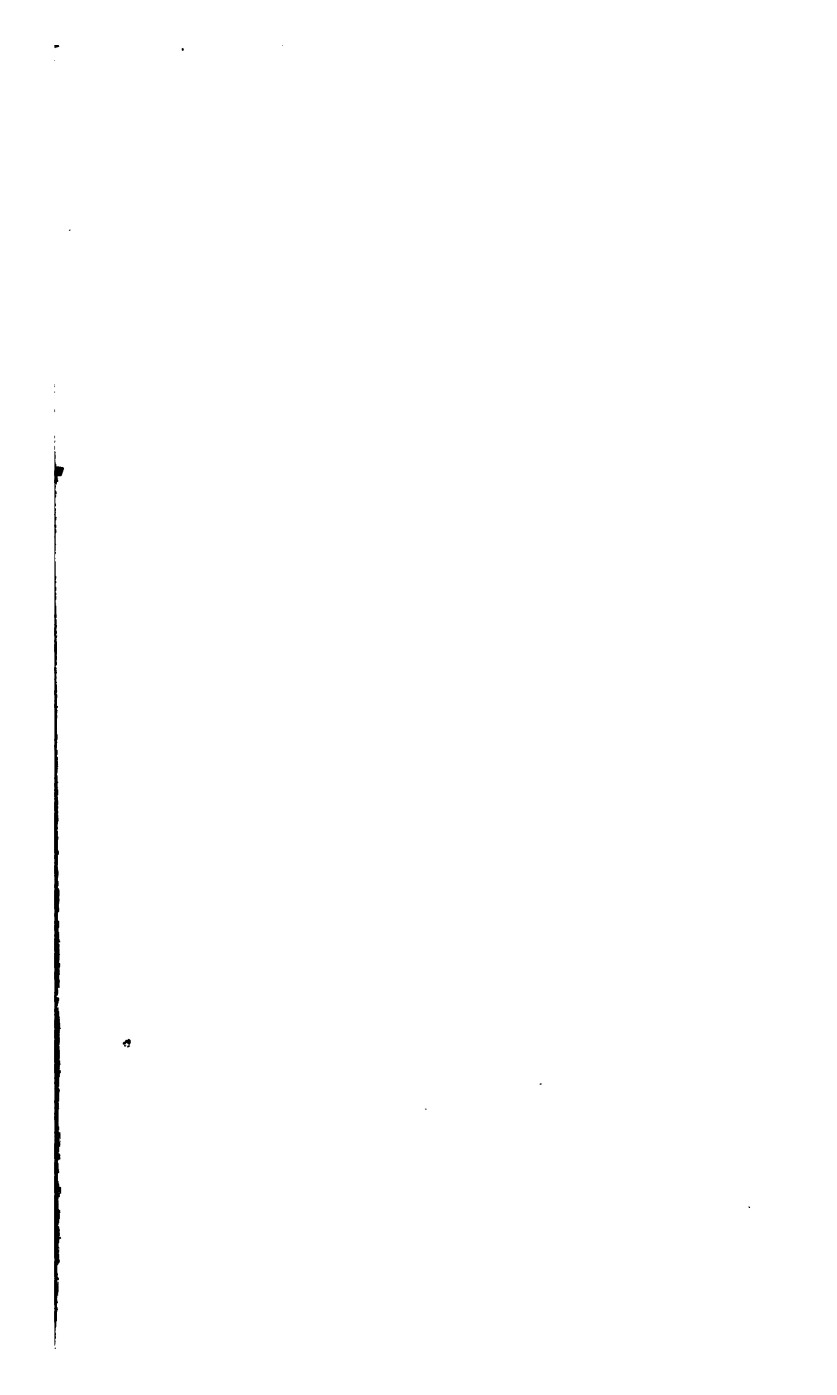
Throughout this poem, our author is in nothing more happy than in his transitions ; which are so conducted as, without the tediousness of a methodical arrangement, to afford all the beauties of variety and contrast. His different stanzas are so arranged as agreeably to diversify and relieve one another. He passes from particular to general, from general to particular description ; and intersperses his celebration of the powers of Venus with the description of her festival, of the birth of the Goddess, that of Cupid, &c. These form so many episodes, or pictures that he holds out in succession to the reader's fancy, only to return to his main subject, which he still keeps in view throughout the whole. Having traced the empire of Venus from the minutest and most delicate part of the vegetable creation to the elements themselves ; and extended it over the remotest boundaries of creation, he returns, in this concluding stanza, to describe her influence on particular species of animals ; the herds, the flocks, and the feathered tribes. He ends, as he began, with an invocation of the Spring ; and as he ushered in that genial season with the song of birds, he concludes his poem by celebrating the beautiful strains of the nightingale.

THE END.

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